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Advancement of women

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission

**Report of the Secretary-General on the
Peacebuilding Fund**

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the statement by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2012/29), in which the Council requested me to report, no later than December 2014, on further progress in United Nations peacebuilding efforts in the aftermath of conflict, including the issue of women's participation in peacebuilding, with particular emphasis on the impact on the ground, including lessons learned from United Nations peacebuilding activities in country-specific contexts. The report builds on my earlier reports on peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict (A/63/881-S/2009/304, A/64/866-S/2010/386 and A/67/499-S/2012/746) as well as on women's participation in peacebuilding (A/65/354-S/2010/466) and reflects on the elements contained in the aforementioned statement of the President.

2. The Security Council and the General Assembly have long recognized the centrality of peacebuilding to United Nations political, security and developmental efforts in countries emerging from conflict, as well as the complexity of peacebuilding challenges. Our understanding of peacebuilding has come a long way since the creation of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture in 2005. We have become increasingly cognizant that peacebuilding is inherently a political exercise that depends on political leadership and demands sustained international political accompaniment, as well as a favourable regional environment.



3. Peacebuilding represents the sum of our efforts to create the foundations for sustained peace after conflict. It is carried out by peacekeeping operations, special political missions and United Nations country teams, consisting of agencies, funds and programmes. It requires firm and continued support from Member States, and lies at the very heart of our ambitions in countries emerging from conflict. Avoiding the relapse into war was the primary motivation for the creation of the peacebuilding architecture. As mandated by the General Assembly and the Security Council, Member States will review the peacebuilding architecture in 2015. I hope that this review will shed light on how we, collectively, can better assist States and societies to recover from conflict and avoid the calamitous return to violence.
4. In my last report (A/67/499-S/2012/746), I identified three key priority directions for the engagement of the United Nations system in peacebuilding, namely inclusivity, institution-building and sustained international support and mutual accountability. These priority areas are intimately linked and form the core of our efforts to promote long-term peace and stability and avoid the recurrence of violent conflicts. Post-conflict institutions need to be rooted in inclusive political agreements and systems that make possible meaningful participation by wide-ranging social groups. Political processes and institution-building require sustained and long-term international political, financial and technical support.
5. Building political consensus and social cohesion requires steady investment, as well as flexible and agile responses to immediate needs. Peace agreements present a critical opportunity for achieving consensus about the key principles on which institution-building should rest. The political agreements that underlie transition processes often require strong international support and a favourable regional environment. The Peacebuilding Commission, which is mandated to promote the coherence of international efforts in support of post-conflict countries, continues to play a vital role in facilitating the constructive engagement of international and regional stakeholders.
6. Advancing the extension of State authority and rebuilding State institutions in the aftermath of conflict is crucial to the sustainability of peace. The Security Council has recognized the centrality of these issues, including them as priority tasks in the mandates of numerous peacekeeping and special political missions. The development of legitimate, accountable and effective institutions that deliver services equitably is essential for countries to respond to the needs of the population and create non-violent channels to manage conflicts. Security sector and rule of law institutions deserve particular attention as the organs responsible for the protection of the population and the legitimate defence of State institutions.
7. Implementing these priorities remains an ongoing challenge. Peacekeeping and special political missions and the different agencies, funds and programmes that support the development of critical post-conflict institutions still face difficulties finding the necessary resources. While much of the capacity for security interventions and political facilitation is provided as part of Security Council mandates, the capabilities and resources required for institution-building are often absent or slow to arrive, leaving political transitions frail and unsupported. Women's participation in peacebuilding is often underfunded, undermining their contribution to stability and recovery. The Peacebuilding Fund partly addresses this gap in the short term by providing quick funding for critical institution-building, political dialogue and rule of law initiatives. Ensuring the necessary longer-term and larger-scale support, however, remains challenging.

II. Progress update

8. In the two years since my last report, the United Nations has made significant gains in assisting countries to consolidate peace after conflict despite far-reaching challenges. A number of countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Tunisia, which are recovering from recent periods of violent conflict or political crisis, are now developing more stable institutions and more inclusive political systems. The closure of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) and the Organization's transition to a country team-only presence at the end of March 2014 underscores the progress achieved. The eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia, among others, are starting to emerge from decades of violence and instability. Yet, they face immense challenges developing institutions and achieving social cohesion. At the same time, the international community continues to grapple with relapses into violent conflict in the Central African Republic and South Sudan.

9. Sierra Leone's steady progress in consolidating peace since its civil war ended in 2002 has enabled the country to focus on sustainable development, thereby solidifying more than a decade of increasing stability. During this period, successive United Nations missions and the country team adopted an integrated approach around a joint strategy in support of national efforts. This was bolstered by collective Member State support and improved relations with neighbouring countries. The Organization's strong partnership with successive Governments and the people of Sierra Leone made possible the withdrawal of UNIPSIL and the assumption of greater responsibility by the Government.

10. The United Nations contributed broad and multifaceted support to Sierra Leone's transition. The inter-party dialogue organized by UNIPSIL, with strong backing from the Peacebuilding Commission, reinforced confidence in the country's political system by helping to maintain a level playing field and secure the participation of all political parties in the 2012 elections. Likewise, the United Nations also supported institutions, such as the All Political Parties Women's Association, whose involvement boosted women's participation and increased popular trust in the process. Sierra Leone has successfully conducted three peaceful and credible elections since emerging from war, anchoring democratic institutions and inclusive politics.

11. Various United Nations entities also assisted with the creation of key Sierra Leonean institutions, including the National Human Rights Commission, the National Electoral Commission, the Anti-Corruption Commission and the ombudsman's office. These institutions have contributed to the legitimacy of the State and its public accountability. The National Human Rights Commission, for instance, investigates complaints and initiates inquiries, such as its notable probe into alleged gross violations of human rights in Bumbuna, Tonkolili district, in 2012. The United Nations also assisted the Government and national institutions in tackling longer-term challenges, including management of natural resources, youth unemployment, security sector reform and conventional weapons and ammunition management.

12. Significant challenges lie ahead for Sierra Leone, illustrating the need for sustained support, including from the Peacebuilding Commission. The United Nations, with financial backing from the Peacebuilding Fund, will continue to

collaborate with the Government of Sierra Leone on its constitutional review, security sector reform and the strengthening of human rights institutions, among other issues. In addition, Sierra Leone's mutual accountability framework, created in accordance with the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, provides a mechanism for aligning donors in support of government priorities, strengthening national ownership and the coherence of international support.

13. Sierra Leone's progress stands in stark contrast to the tragic relapses into violence that we have witnessed in several countries, despite the presence of United Nations peace operations and extensive international efforts. Lessons must be learned from the experience in South Sudan, where the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was mandated to consolidate peace and security in the newly independent country. In establishing the new Mission, the Security Council, in its resolutions 1996 (2011) and 2057 (2012), stressed the importance of supporting national peacebuilding priorities and requested UNMISS to provide a plan for United Nations-system support to specific peacebuilding tasks. A United Nations peacebuilding support plan was aligned to the South Sudan Development Plan, using the New Deal Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals as a framework. There were visible gains in creating and strengthening public institutions and processes in the first year and a half following South Sudan's independence. Progress was also achieved towards transforming its national police into a more professional force. The Mission used its good offices to significant effect to help the Government address emerging threats, including from inter-communal violence and conflicts along the country's borders, as well as from landmines and explosive remnants of war.

14. Despite these advances, significant gaps in the development of political and security institutions remained. Major outbreaks of violence and the abrupt contraction of State revenues in 2012, following the dispute with the Sudan over oil exports, slowed progress and impeded the efforts of the United Nations and the broader international community to support the extension of State authority and the expansion of service delivery. Infighting among the political elite, allegations of large-scale corruption and incidents of violent abuse by undisciplined elements of the national security forces undermined trust in the political leadership. The severe shortfall in State resources and continued tension with the Sudan undermined plans to demobilize and reintegrate former fighters, while national security forces expanded as regional rebellions were resolved by integrating armed groups into the Sudan People's Liberation Army. Notwithstanding international efforts, the country's leaders failed to broaden the political space and dialogue, conduct wide consultation on a national constitution, or ensure a separation of the army from the ruling political party.

15. Political competition, which involved historical disputes and struggles for control of State resources, led to a split within the military and police forces and culminated in the resumption of violent conflict late in 2013. This conflict escalated with a speed, scope and scale that the United Nations and others did not anticipate. The intensification of violence, particularly targeted killings, further created deep ethnic and regional cleavages, which have complicated the search for a settlement. Gains in institutions development were largely lost when the power struggle spiralled out of control and led the country back into a devastating conflict.

16. Although recent developments in South Sudan call for deeper, long-term reflection by the international community, a few preliminary conclusions can be drawn. First, there was a need for greater political encouragement, incentives and pressure to promote advances in the critical areas that could ensure the non-violent management of political tensions. Secondly, South Sudan illustrates the challenges that nationally led peacebuilding strategies and priorities face in countries where deep political divisions persist and control of the State is contested. In such cases, support for nationally led initiatives can limit the impact and range of approaches and strategies. Thirdly, United Nations missions and country teams must adapt their peacebuilding approaches and strategies more flexibly in response to changes in the political environment. Lastly, technical and programmatic support for institution-building needs to be grounded in strong and effective political agreements as well as measures to build social cohesion and ensure the non-violent management of political tensions. Political settlements also need sustained international accompaniment to reinforce adherence.

17. The relapse into violent conflict in the Central African Republic highlights similar issues and underscores the importance of the three priority areas outlined in my last report, although unlike the state of affairs in South Sudan, sustained international support was lacking. Despite several national dialogues and extensive external political facilitation, the State's political institutions remained fragile and lacked inclusivity. The north-east of the country was chronically excluded from political participation. At many levels, the State remained characterized by corrupt and predatory behaviour. Government institutions, particularly outside the capital, have been either non-existent or extremely weak, making violent attempts to gain access to government resources and State power feasible.

18. Successive United Nations missions and the country team received limited support for efforts to support the development of the State's institutional capacity and improve mechanisms of governance. The limited support was compounded by fragmented interventions and the absence of a strong and coherent political framework for their implementation. The initiatives aimed at security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration from 2010 to 2012 were not accompanied by sustained commitment from different armed groups and successive national Governments. The lack of sustained commitment was compounded by fragmented security sector interventions from international, regional and subregional actors, which were inadequately grounded in a national vision for State reform. Successive attempts at disarmament, demobilization and reintegration lacked sufficient funding and political support as well as approaches better suited to the political context.

19. New opportunities have been created with the appointment of transitional authorities and the engagement of regional actors. In order to avoid replicating the shortfalls of past attempts to promote long-term solutions, cohesion among international and subregional interventions will remain particularly important. In parts of the country, the deployment of peacekeepers has provided a measure of security. This window of opportunity needs to be seized upon to build a more viable political consensus and more effective and accountable State, security and public institutions, which are essential to protect the rights of citizens, perform basic State functions and defend the State against violent challenges.

20. My Rights Up Front initiative to prevent and end serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law has guided the United Nations responses in the Central African Republic and South Sudan following the emergence or relapse of violent conflict. The initiative aims to prevent serious violations, but where it is too late to do so, it focuses on the protection of civilians. Human rights violations are good indicators of worse things to come. When mass atrocities are allowed to occur, they can create cycles of violence and long-term animosities, presenting serious obstacles to the social cohesion needed to restore peace and security. The prevention of serious human rights violations is fundamental to the environment in which peace and development can flourish.

21. Sierra Leone highlights the potential for the strategic integration of United Nations efforts to consolidate peace. However, continued improvements are required to better align conflict analysis, political leadership and programmatic support in the field and in mission planning. The 2013 United Nations policy on integrated assessment and planning provides for joint analysis and a common United Nations vision of priorities for peace consolidation in each situation. Its implementation should help to ensure that mission planning is faster and more strategically focused. The early stages of mission planning and start-up are often arduous and lack strategic clarity, as experienced in the Central African Republic and Mali. As noted in my report on civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict (A/68/696-S/2014/5), aligning mission and country team resources and capacity with a strategy for early institution-building continues to be a significant challenge.

22. Such alignment has progressed in the critical area of rule of law. The joint global focal point for the police, justice and corrections areas in the rule of law in post-conflict and other crisis situations is helping to link the expertise of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations entities in order to develop and implement common strategies and programmes. Established in 2012, the global focal point has already led to increased inter-agency collaboration in Guinea, Libya, Mali and Somalia. An independent review of its first year of operation noted that the focal point holds further promise for the delivery of assistance to the field. Its next steps include an augmented role in the strategic direction of United Nations rule of law assistance, including support to mission transition planning and technical assistance on programme design and implementation.

23. Integration has often been complicated by high transaction costs and different mandates among various United Nations entities. It has been shown to be effective when operations are guided by a clear vision, with one set of objectives, together with a strategy for consolidating peace. We have seen in many cases that the facilitation and good offices initiatives of my Special Representatives, Special Envoys and Special Advisers are most effective when complemented by activities of country teams in the areas of institutional strengthening, dialogue and inclusive economic development. The Peacebuilding Fund has often been instrumental in advancing such an integrated approach.

24. During the period under review, the United Nations provided electoral assistance in a number of post-conflict contexts, including in Guinea and Madagascar, often combining technical assistance with good offices and diplomatic support to help ensure that elections contributed to peace consolidation rather than igniting tensions. One important institutional innovation to improve delivery of

electoral assistance is the establishment of the first, single, system-wide electoral roster designed to ensure the rapid deployment of electoral experts by all relevant parts of the United Nations system.

25. Positioning technical and programmatic support to contribute to larger political and strategic peacebuilding goals in non-mission settings is also key. The Joint (UNDP-Department of Political Affairs) Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention seeks to increase the Organization's capacity to support national partners in their efforts to attain peaceful and sustainable development, including through the deployment of peace and development advisers. For example, peace and development advisers in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, building on the efforts made by my regional Special Representative, have supported cross-border community-level dialogues to address tensions related to the use of water resources. In Kyrgyzstan, the adviser has supported government efforts to create local conflict-prevention mechanisms and worked closely with various government institutions to review proposed legislation for conflict sensitivity. The Peacebuilding Fund has, in recent years, increasingly supported this programme in order to ensure integrated and conflict-sensitive planning and programming.

26. Developing lessons on peacebuilding good practices requires more comprehensive information on the impact of diverse approaches and programmes. Experience has shown that quantifiable evidence of peacebuilding impact can appear elusive. Indeed, what is most important in some contexts, such as rebuilding societal trust and institutional legitimacy, may be the most difficult to assess. Too often activities focus on "hardware", such as equipment and buildings, which are easy to measure, rather than the more intangible outcomes that target the drivers of conflict. This has, for example, been the case in security sector reform, where there is a need to go beyond training and equipping, to investments in improved governance and oversight of security forces. The main threats to peace and stability should drive the design of peacebuilding activities as well as the development of corresponding benchmarks. The United Nations will need to expand and improve its mechanisms, including the use of surveys, for evaluating and monitoring progress in these areas.

III. Inclusivity

27. In my last report, I stressed the importance of mechanisms for inclusive politics in post-conflict transitions. I cannot overstate their importance today. Promoting inclusivity can involve difficult choices and trade-offs regarding urgency, representativeness, effectiveness and legitimacy. There are times, for example, when a peacemaking approach must be limited to the actual belligerents and political elites. Yet, in order to sustain peace and uphold basic rights of political participation, subsequent mechanisms for broad participation need to be embraced, with the goal of increasing inclusivity over time.

28. The promotion of inclusive politics is also integral to genuine national ownership of peacebuilding efforts and strategies. Where peacebuilding efforts are rooted in inclusive societal consultation and efforts to minimize exclusionary practices, they generate trust and legitimacy in the State and its institutions. By contrast, the absence of inclusive politics in the wake of conflict all too often contributes to violent contestation for control of the State. In such environments, the

timing and conduct of elections has to be approached with caution, as contested electoral processes and outcomes can be destabilizing. Any effort to build sustainable peace must manage political competition through institutions governed by law, rather than on the battlefield. At the same time, the development of mechanisms for inclusive politics and broad participation must take into account the divisions, fears and perceptions inherent in post-conflict communities.

29. Mechanisms for effective public participation are critical in the reform of core State institutions. In this regard, Tunisia provides an inspiring example. With broad participation from political parties and civil society, its political process culminated in the adoption of a new Constitution. The provision of technical expertise by the United Nations to all political parties in the Constituent Assembly, as well as the facilitation of inputs from Tunisian professional and civil society groups, were key to the credibility and success of the process.

30. In recent years the United Nations has used its good offices to advance inclusive political systems as part of strategies to promote peace consolidation. In Guinea, for example, my Special Representative for West Africa was instrumental in facilitating an inter-party agreement for the conduct of parliamentary elections in 2013. The country team developed innovative mechanisms to complement these negotiations and broaden participation by other key stakeholders, including women. To buttress the agreement, the United Nations conducted a series of public forums with local political leaders, which built awareness and trust in the electoral process. Moreover, the country team collaborated with the main political parties to train electoral monitors and build electoral management capacity within each party alliance.

31. These efforts were further supplemented by an initiative — the Women's Situation Room — that provided support to a network of local women's organizations, enabling women to play a crucial role as electoral monitors with a rapid response capacity. South-South cooperation between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Guinea, Mali and Senegal for technical support and training provided to the women's electoral monitors was a key aspect of the initiative, which was replicated in the elections in Guinea-Bissau in April 2014. The initiative encouraged confidence in the electoral process while at the same time strengthening women's political participation. These collaborative interventions helped to ensure that the 2013 election took place without the inter-communal violence that marred Guinea's first post-crisis elections in 2010.

32. In Burundi the Peacebuilding Commission, together with the country team, supported the efforts of the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB) to foster a more inclusive political environment in the context of increased political tensions and human rights violations. My Special Representative worked closely with the Government, opposition parties and civil society organizations to strengthen political dialogue, including through the organization of a series of workshops, which spurred the consensual adoption of an electoral road map and a code of conduct for the elections in 2015. BNUB also supported national stakeholders in developing a new electoral code, which was adopted by the National Assembly in April 2014. The emphasis on broad public engagement was intended to safeguard against electoral violence or contested electoral outcomes. As ongoing violence related to the youth wings of political parties is of particular concern, my Special Representative also promoted non-violent engagement of youth in politics,

including through programmes funded by the Peacebuilding Fund and implemented by the country team. These efforts were conducted in advance of the withdrawal of BNUB at the end of 2014 and the deployment of a United Nations electoral observer mission requested by the Government.

33. The Government of Kyrgyzstan established an agency in 2013 to lead the implementation of a new government policy, developed with United Nations and Peacebuilding Fund support, on national unity and inter-ethnic relations. The United Nations also provided technical assistance for a broad dialogue concerning multilingual education, minority representation in politics and more inclusive local self-government. Moreover, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and UNDP provided legal training and logistical support to the Women's Peace Committees, which made possible the monitoring of community-level tensions and improved government response, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees supported durable solutions for displaced persons. These activities contributed to a deeper sense of social cohesion and boosted trust between the population and local authorities throughout the southern districts of the country affected by the conflict. Despite areas of ongoing fragility, evaluations have shown that these programmes also nurtured a heightened sense of security and safety in some areas affected by the unrest in 2010.

34. UN-Women, with financial assistance from the Peacebuilding Fund, supported women-run conflict-resolution mechanisms, known as "peace huts" in Liberia. These mechanisms provided safe communal spaces for women to promote community dialogue and mediation efforts and are credited with having improved local security. In some areas, "peace huts" have also become a platform to protest the illegal exploitation of Liberia's natural resources.

35. Giving voice to women's concerns in all stages of peacemaking and peacebuilding is essential to the development of inclusive politics. Further advancing women's participation in post-conflict political and development processes, as set forth in my Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding, remains a top priority. Since my report on women's participation in peacebuilding (A/65/354-S/2010/466), a growing number of women have been appointed to senior positions as mediators, envoys and members of negotiation teams. The United Nations has also increased its support to women's civil society organizations in accessing peace processes and advancing post-conflict political participation.

36. Progress is being made in the allocation of funding to support gender-responsive peacebuilding programming, although tracking progress remains difficult owing to the lack of good data. The Peacebuilding Fund uses a gender marker to track funding allocations to women's empowerment and gender equality. The steady increase in projects funded from the Peacebuilding Fund in which gender is fully integrated — from 10 per cent in 2008 to 70 per cent in 2013 — reflects a growing recognition of the relevance of gender issues to all peacebuilding interventions. Nevertheless, funding allocations for projects whose main objective is to promote women's empowerment and gender equality are falling short of the 15 per cent target. Such allocations amounted to 7.4 per cent in 2013, down from 10.3 per cent in 2012 when the Fund's allocation was boosted because of the gender promotion initiative. A review of over 300 UNDP projects in six post-conflict contexts revealed

that 14 per cent of funding had been allocated to activities that would make a significant impact on gender equality, while 6 per cent of funding was allocated exclusively to women's empowerment and gender equality. This finding highlights the continuing need for proactive approaches, such as the second gender promotion initiative that the Fund launched in 2014.

37. Despite some promising developments, gaps remain between the ambitions expressed in the Seven-Point Action Plan and the Organization's concrete activities in this area. In particular, there has been a continued lack of investment in activities supporting women's economic empowerment, including in addressing issues of access, use and control of natural resources. I also encourage United Nations entities to prioritize women's access to justice in rule of law programming in post-conflict environments.

38. The United Nations Peace Fund for Nepal stands out for its multifaceted efforts to mainstream gender perspectives into its management and programming. Thirty per cent of monies earmarked for projects during the funding round in 2012 were allocated to addressing the needs of women and girls and/or gender equality. Projects supporting land reform, conflict prevention, the rule of law and the reintegration of child soldiers all included specific provisions to address the needs of women and girls. Such measures contributed to the implementation of the Government's national action plan on Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). One of these projects undertook women's safety audits to determine the location of police station deployments in order to improve the security of women and girls. A project on land issues ensured extensive women's participation in consultations on land-use planning, which has traditionally been a male domain. Developments in Nepal demonstrate that appreciable progress can be made with targeted funding, leadership and capacities for gender-responsive programming.

39. As I pointed out in my last report, youth should also be part of inclusive peacebuilding processes to bolster the likelihood of sustained peace. In the ensuing years the Peacebuilding Support Office, together with other United Nations entities, NGOs and youth organizations, developed guiding principles on the participation of young people in peacebuilding. The principles build upon experiences from UNDP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which have adolescent and youth-specific interventions in many conflict-affected countries.

IV. Institution-building

40. Building strong and effective institutions remains a core element of post-conflict peace consolidation and a critical task for the United Nations system. Effective, legitimate and accountable State institutions that deliver public services reduce incentives for violent conflict and strengthen the State's resilience in the face of possible renewed violence. The capacity of such institutions to respond to popular expectations is one of the key conditions for sustainable peace. Experience shows, however, that this goal is neither quick nor easy to achieve and that efforts to build post-conflict institutions must be conceived of as a long-term undertaking even under the best of circumstances. In my last progress report on civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict (A/68/696-S/2014/5), I emphasized the role of

institution-building at both the political and technical levels, and underlined the need for a more systematic and coherent response by the United Nations that is strongly connected to national priorities.

41. Investments in institution-building in the aftermath of conflict must be planned with close attention to the prevailing political situation. Unresolved tensions and political competition, as well as popular mistrust in Government, limit the feasibility of rapid wholesale reforms of public administration in the aftermath of conflict. Such is the conclusion of a recent United Nations review, which recommended rapid support to restoring basic functionality and service delivery using existing institutions and systems. The review also emphasized the need to provide greater support to local governments, which play a critical role in providing social services and rebuilding the trust in and legitimacy of the Government.

42. We have seen a number of positive examples in recent years that the United Nations can build on going forward to support institution-building in post-conflict situations. For example, the UNDP-supported Regional Initiative for Capacity Enhancement of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, funded by Norway, helped to address the inability of South Sudan to deliver core public services from 2010 onwards. By embedding civil service mentors from neighbouring States in various ministries, the project provided rapid, tailored and cost-effective civil service capacity development. Some embedded mentors have continued to work despite renewed conflict. Notwithstanding the violence that erupted in December 2013, the programme can serve as a model in other post-conflict settings.

43. The United Nations invested heavily in the revitalization of State institutions and the improvement of access to justice in the regions of Côte d'Ivoire most affected by the post-electoral violence in 2011, working with the Government to redeploy State representatives and refurbish State infrastructure. As the right to Ivorian citizenship was highly contested during the conflict, initiatives were launched to simplify birth registration and the issuance of identity papers, which contributed to better access to services and higher electoral participation, as well as strengthened social cohesion. Community-led, early childhood development centres, supported through UNICEF, further helped to build social cohesion by bringing together women from divergent backgrounds around the common goal of children's well-being. With United Nations support, new systems of community-oriented policing and oversight were also introduced as a means of repairing public trust and confidence in the police and gendarmerie. These steps, and other measures, have expedited the return of refugees and displaced persons, as well as the resolution of a number of local, land-related disputes.

44. Reform of rule of law institutions, including improvements in oversight, accountability and administration, is often a key priority for post-conflict countries. In Burundi support to the National Independent Human Rights Commission has been central to the United Nations strategy to enhance the country's capacity to monitor and report on human rights violations. The Commission, which carries out human rights investigations, has worked to improve the impartiality and performance of the security forces and to enhance overall respect for human rights in Burundi. In Liberia the United Nations supported the establishment of the first of three justice and security hubs, in Gbarnga, with additional hubs under development in Zwedru and Harper. The hubs, which receive extensive funding from the

Peacebuilding Fund, are a key component of the Government's strategy for extending justice and security services beyond the capital. The results of a user satisfaction survey conducted in 2013 indicated higher levels of appreciation for security services in counties covered by the Gbarnga hub and credited it with reduced levels of violence. Yet, challenges remain, including the generation of sustainable domestic funding for the hubs and the slow deployment of necessary staff and services.

45. As in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, expanding the presence of the State into areas previously controlled by armed groups remains critical to stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Building upon new opportunities created by the surrender of the March 23 Movement (M23), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), United Nations entities and other partners work within the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy to support the State's ability to re-establish its presence and functions. The initiative bridges the Mission's protection and stabilization efforts, providing logistical and technical support for the deployment of public administration, police and the judiciary. Within this framework, UNDP and MONUSCO have supported mobile courts and the deployment of a special police unit for the protection of women and children, which led to the referral of more than 1,000 cases of sexual violence to the judicial system in 2013 and the first half of 2014. Such efforts are combined with the promotion of dialogue with local communities to ensure greater acceptance and greater public accountability of the new institutions and the peaceful resolution of disputes. Progress in many parts of the east could be further enhanced by addressing implementation delays, funding shortfalls and a lack of government employees in areas where the Government has regained control. The time lapse between military control and the extension of State authority can undermine the State's ability to create a stabilizing presence.

46. Rapid resumption of social service delivery can also play an important role in supporting the extension of State authority. The efforts of UNICEF in Somalia, for example, support the resumption of educational services through the rehabilitation and construction of schools in areas recaptured from al-Shabaab, helping to restore confidence in the State. The programme, conducted as part of the three-year interim education sector strategic plan, involves extensive participation of diverse clans and communities so as to strengthen social cohesion and ensure broad acceptance.

47. The early availability of funding for institution-building is critical to the rapid restoration of basic State administrative and service delivery functions. Policy and guidance tools, reflecting lessons learned from previous undertakings, are also necessary. To this end, the United Nations and the World Bank have developed a joint diagnostic tool for re-establishing core government functions in post-conflict situations. The Central African Republic has already benefited from this endeavour. A joint World Bank and United Nations initiative for the early payment of salaries to civil servants bolstered confidence in the Transitional Authorities and helped to ensure the basic functioning of ministries and security forces in advance of more comprehensive assistance.

48. Beyond such efforts, generating sufficient domestic revenues to fund government operations is essential to the development of State institutions. In Burundi, Liberia and Rwanda the creation of an independent taxation authority and the revision of tax policies with United Nations technical support have led to

significant increases in public revenue collection. This is particularly notable because developing a domestic tax base and collection system is a long-term endeavour, prompting many countries to rely primarily on natural resources for State revenue in the years after conflict.

49. Sustainable and transparent management of natural resources is central to post-conflict planning since it represents both a critical source of government revenue and a significant driver of violent conflict where natural resources are not well managed. Overdependence on such revenues can discourage countries from developing sustainable tax income, which is critical for long-term growth and enhancing a social contract. The challenge lies in establishing institutions that support a sustainable transformation of natural assets into State revenues, livelihoods and infrastructure without creating new sources of friction or contributing to long-term environmental degradation.

50. To meet this challenge, the United Nations has established a global partnership with the European Union on land, natural resources and conflict prevention, which has assisted several Governments, including in Afghanistan, with the management of natural resources in ways that minimize conflict. In the Great Lakes region, the partnership is supporting Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda to improve natural resource management and promote transparency in land tenure and mining, in collaboration with civil society groups and the private sector. In addition, the United Nations and the World Bank have developed a conflict-sensitive framework to help Governments respond to conflict risks through key entry points along the extractive industries value chain.

51. In Sierra Leone the United Nations worked to strengthen the capacity of the Environmental Protection Agency's long-term resource planning, mine monitoring and environmental assessment. This has led to improved environmental and social impact assessments, which, in turn, helped to accelerate investment in the sector. Impact assessments have provided a mechanism to encourage public participation in decision-making over natural resource management, reducing tensions with local communities. In Liberia, where competition for land and control over natural resources are also sources of conflict, the United Nations is working with the World Bank to help the Government to better manage natural resource concessions through strengthened citizens' consultation and engagement in planning and implementation. This effort complements the capacity-building and technical assistance provided by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme to Liberia's Land Commission, which is implementing extensive land reforms, as well as engaging in community-level, land dispute resolution.

52. Post-conflict States are vulnerable not only to violence and the destabilization of institutions, but also to infiltration by organized crime. Indeed, transnational organized crime, including trafficking in drugs and arms, continues to undermine progress towards sustainable peace in Central America, Central Asia and West Africa. Under the West Africa Coast Initiative, multi-agency transnational crime units were established in Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone, to be followed by Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea later in 2014. While full implementation in Guinea-Bissau was delayed by the coup d'état in 2012, the Liberian and Sierra Leonean transnational crime units have advanced national and international cooperation, leading to arrests, convictions and substantial drug seizures. The decision by the Government of Sierra Leone to fully incorporate the units within its national

security architecture and budget demonstrated its deep commitment to the initiative. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is assisting Malian police and law enforcement institutions to improve their capacity to conduct counter-narcotics operations, criminal investigations and border control.

53. The Ebola outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in 2014 has led to great loss of life and has had severe consequences for people's livelihoods and State institutions in the affected countries. The epidemic has had a particularly devastating impact on the health-care sector and has placed new strains on the security and justice sectors and core government functions. The epidemic has highlighted institutional weaknesses in the affected countries and the need for sustained support to national frameworks and systems, which are crucial for long-term stability.

V. Sustained international support and mutual accountability

54. Post-conflict peacebuilding is a generational undertaking that relies heavily on predictable financial, technical and political support in the short, medium and long term. It also requires coherence among a wide spectrum of actors, including neighbouring countries, regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions and donor countries. The transnational dimensions of many conflicts, including the cross-border movement of weapons, combatants and illicit financial and natural resource flows, make regional involvement in support of post-conflict stability essential. The annual session of the Peacebuilding Commission in June 2014 also highlighted the need for greater international and regional cooperation to help post-conflict States combat illicit financial flows, which deprive them of critical resources for institution-building and development.

55. The peace, security and cooperation framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region represents a groundbreaking commitment by the countries of the region and international and civil society organizations to join forces around mutual accountability and sustainable peace. The framework, signed by 13 African States and witnessed by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Southern African Development Community, the African Union, the United Nations and other key partners requires its signatories to implement policies that foster political stability, justice, security and development. It is a tool that is essential to ensure greater coherence among international and regional actors in support of the peacebuilding process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region.

56. Recent experience in the Sahel and central Africa has also illustrated the need for regional strategies that are multidimensional, addressing political, security and developmental aspects. Reflecting this need, the United Nations has developed an integrated strategy for the Sahel that is built around support for inclusive and effective governance, regional and national security mechanisms capable of addressing cross-border threats and integrated plans for long-term resilience. As part of the strategy, the United Nations is partnering with the African Union to support a regional, ministerial-level leadership platform tasked with boosting security coordination and cooperation in the region and neighbouring States. This effort

represents an extraordinary move to advance partnerships among international, regional and national actors in a comprehensive way.

57. The President of the World Bank and I made unprecedented visits to the Great Lakes region in May 2013, and to the Sahel, together with colleagues from the African Union, the African Development Bank and the European Union, in November 2013. These joint visits drew attention to peacebuilding challenges in two highly vulnerable regions and provided renewed emphasis on the United Nations-World Bank partnership. Our visit underscored the close collaboration between the United Nations and the World Bank in Mali, where a joint project assesses the economic and social impact of MINUSMA deployment with a view to maximizing benefits to the local economy. Simultaneously, the World Bank financial management assessment of Mali's security sector will make possible more transparent management of and greater international support to this sector.

58. The Peacebuilding Commission also has a particular role to play in enhancing the coherence of regional efforts. This has been a priority for the Commission, especially recently, with regard to the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau, where the Chairs of the Commission's respective country-specific configurations have worked closely with my Special Representatives to engender collaboration from neighbouring countries and the region.

59. In addition to political support, most countries emerging from conflict require sustained financial and technical support for essential State functioning and the development of effective institutions. In this regard, the United Nations is expanding its partnerships and collaboration with international financial institutions, including regional development banks, to support post-conflict recovery and promote coherence and long-term financial assistance. A case in point is the Geneva Partners Conference organized by the Government of Burundi in October 2012 with the support of the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's country-specific configuration, the African Development Bank and the World Bank, which raised pledges of more than \$2.5 billion in support of Burundi's poverty reduction strategy paper.

60. In post-conflict situations, pooled financing mechanisms continue to be important instruments for coherent and sustained international support. They encourage aid alignment behind government priorities, foster greater coherence of international responses to complex situations, reduce transaction costs, share risks and strengthen mutual accountability. The Peacebuilding Fund is one such pooled financing mechanism. It has been extremely useful in enabling the United Nations to support peace processes, foster rapid implementation of peace agreements and invest in early institution-building and the provision of peace dividends. Since its creation, the Fund has allocated nearly \$500 million, with the countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission receiving more than half. Pooled funding instruments have also served to enhance collaboration between the United Nations and the World Bank. The Somalia development and reconstruction facility, for example, serves as both a coordination framework and a financing architecture providing a single strategy and oversight mechanism for trust funds managed by the World Bank and the United Nations.

61. Compacts between post-conflict States and key international partners around mutually agreed peacebuilding priorities also have the potential to ensure more effective and sustained assistance. The New Deal compacts in Sierra Leone and

Somalia have galvanized joint efforts by the respective Governments and their international partners to identify clear national peacebuilding priorities. In Somalia the compact was accompanied by the Somalia development and reconstruction facility, which channels new funding in support of the compact's priorities. If their development and implementation reflect domestic consensus on political and developmental goals, compacts can provide an opportunity to maintain coherent international engagement in the longer term and ensure mutual accountability between countries emerging from conflict and their international partners.

62. Generating sustained international political and financial support is particularly critical during the drawdown and closure of United Nations missions. Mission transition and reconfiguration involves the handover of responsibilities to national Governments, with the country team continuing to play a supporting role. New guidelines for these transitions, based on realistic timelines and benchmarks, as well as guidance for comparative advantage analysis, were developed as a complement to the integrated assessment and planning policy. The guidelines advanced better planning and coordination in the transition in Sierra Leone, which was completed smoothly in March 2014.

63. Typically, peacebuilding challenges in post-conflict countries outlast the presence of United Nations missions. For country teams to continue critical interventions in institution-building and development, sufficient funding and capacities must be available. The withdrawal of missions also can limit the Organization's ability to provide ongoing political support and facilitation, which remains critical in some countries. In such cases, the engagement of regional and subregional organizations together with intergovernmental mechanisms, such as the Peacebuilding Commission, should be called upon to provide the political accompaniment required to reduce the risk of relapse.

64. For the United Nations, the peacebuilding architecture created in 2005 remains a cornerstone of international efforts to support countries emerging from conflict. The decision by Member States to establish the architecture was a response to the frequent relapse into violence of countries emerging from conflict and to a perceived gap in the overall international structure. Within the United Nations, the architecture institutionalized a mechanism to promote sustained attention and coherence of international efforts over time. Its centrepiece is the Peacebuilding Commission, which can bring to bear the collective weight of Member States in support of peace consolidation, utilizing a longer-term post-conflict perspective.

65. The Peacebuilding Commission has devoted considerable effort to realizing a strengthened, more flexible and more strategic role as an intergovernmental mechanism supporting countries emerging from conflict by focusing on its three core functions: political advocacy; resource mobilization; and the coherence of international efforts. It has achieved important results, albeit unevenly, through its country-specific configurations for the six countries on its agenda. Moreover, the Commission has addressed broader peacebuilding themes and policy issues aimed at extracting lessons learned and sharing experiences on cross-cutting issues.

66. The review of the peacebuilding architecture in 2015 will provide an opportunity to strengthen and clarify the scope and quality of the Peacebuilding Commission's engagement and the ways in which it could enhance the broader peacebuilding activities of the United Nations system and the larger international community. I urge Member States to shape the kind of Commission that is relevant,

catalytic and effective. Member States should also consider how best to adapt the Commission's working methods to the changing international environment and to developments within the United Nations and other international organizations since 2005.

VI. Conclusion

67. Countries emerging from conflict face formidable challenges as they seek to overcome the legacy of war and find the path to peace and security. The United Nations has made significant progress in its peacebuilding support to such countries, in several areas and in a variety of contexts. Yet, the Organization has also faced relapses into violence, which underscore the enormity of the task and compel an improvement in its strategies and approaches.

68. Going forward, the United Nations, Member States and the wider international community engaged in post-conflict peacebuilding should collectively focus on the following priorities:

(a) The international community needs to do more to sustain financial, technical and political support to post-conflict countries. Continued Member State engagement through the Peacebuilding Commission and through groups of friends or contact groups has proven to be fundamental to sustaining international attention;

(b) There are continued gaps in the provision of rapid and coherent financial support for the extension of State authority and the re-establishment of core public administration functions. There is also a need to sustain financial support over the long period required by post-conflict States to establish effective institutions, including mechanisms for dialogue and the management of tensions. I urge Member States to continue contributing generously to the Peacebuilding Fund and other pooled financing mechanisms and to coordinate their funding strategies in support of national priorities;

(c) Collaboration with the World Bank and regional development banks should be expanded to support, among other areas, the effective extension of State authority and the strengthening of public financial management, which are critical in post-conflict States. Such partnerships could mobilize specific skills and expertise as well as additional financial resources;

(d) Regional actors and neighbouring countries play a critical role in creating environments conducive to sustainable peace for countries emerging from violent conflict. The Peacebuilding Commission, regional and subregional organizations can support the creation of such environments, in collaboration with United Nations entities. At the same time, further consideration should be given to how the United Nations system can better support regional efforts;

(e) Compacts remain an important tool to set national peacebuilding priorities and align support from the international community. They should be designed to strengthen political accompaniment of national commitments. I encourage the involvement of regional actors in these compacts;

(f) The United Nations must also work in a more integrated and coherent manner. Its efforts must be guided by a political strategy that addresses the principal threats to peace and stability so that programmatic activities can best support the

consolidation of peace. Planning processes should ensure that the United Nations family works towards a clear set of strategic objectives aimed at consolidating peace;

(g) The development of core political institutions, civilian oversight of the security forces, public administration and basic services need to be rooted in inclusive political agreements to ensure the popular legitimacy of the State. The process of inclusive institution-building often requires continued facilitation from the United Nations as well as sustained political support from regional organizations and Member States;

(h) The review of the peacebuilding architecture in 2015 provides an opportunity to ensure that it better serves the needs of countries emerging from conflict and that collective efforts to prevent their relapse into conflict are more successful. I urge Member States to take advantage of the review to make this a reality.

69. I remain committed to continue learning lessons from our experiences on the ground in diverse contexts in order to optimize the impact of United Nations peacebuilding efforts, including in furtherance of my Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding.

70. I stand ready to report further on the Organization's progress, experiences and lessons learned in peacebuilding.

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
23 September 2014

Original: English

Letter dated 23 September 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In the letter dated 20 September 2014 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/691, annex) and other statements made by Iraq, including the letter dated 25 June 2014 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2014/440, annex), Iraq has made clear that it is facing a serious threat of continuing attacks from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) coming out of safe havens in Syria. These safe havens are used by ISIL for training, planning, financing, and carrying out attacks across Iraqi borders and against Iraq's people. For these reasons, the Government of Iraq has asked that the United States lead international efforts to strike ISIL sites and military strongholds in Syria in order to end the continuing attacks on Iraq, to protect Iraqi citizens, and ultimately to enable and arm Iraqi forces to perform their task of regaining control of the Iraqi borders.

ISIL and other terrorist groups in Syria are a threat not only to Iraq, but also to many other countries, including the United States and our partners in the region and beyond. States must be able to defend themselves, in accordance with the inherent right of individual and collective self-defence, as reflected in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, when, as is the case here, the government of the State where the threat is located is unwilling or unable to prevent the use of its territory for such attacks. The Syrian regime has shown that it cannot and will not confront these safe havens effectively itself. Accordingly, the United States has initiated necessary and proportionate military actions in Syria in order to eliminate the ongoing ISIL threat to Iraq, including by protecting Iraqi citizens from further attacks and by enabling Iraqi forces to regain control of Iraq's borders. In addition, the United States has initiated military actions in Syria against al-Qaida elements in Syria known as the Khorasan Group to address terrorist threats that they pose to the United States and our partners and allies.

I request that you circulate this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Samantha J. Power

14-61540 (E) 230914



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**Security Council**

Distr.: General
24 September 2014

Original: English

**Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014)
and 2165 (2014)****Report of the Secretary-General****I. Introduction**

1. This seventh report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014) and paragraph 10 of Security Council resolution 2165 (2014), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report, every 30 days, on the implementation of the resolutions by all parties to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

2. The report covers the period from 19 August to 17 September 2014. The information contained in the report and the attached annex is based on the data available to the United Nations actors on the ground and reports from open sources and sources of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.

II. Major developments**A. Political/military**

3. Conflict and high levels of violence continued across the Syrian Arab Republic during the reporting period, particularly in the governorates of Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Deir ez-Zor, Rif Dimashq, Damascus, Hasakeh, Idlib, Dar'a, Quneitra and Raqqa. Indiscriminate shelling and aerial attacks by government forces and indiscriminate shelling and attacks by armed opposition, extremist and designated terrorist groups¹ continued to result in deaths of, injuries to and displacement of civilians. In its report of 22 August entitled "Updated statistical analysis of documentation of killings in the Syrian Arab Republic",² the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) enumerated a list of 191,369 individuals reported killed between March 2011 and the end of April 2014.

¹ On 30 May 2013, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the Nusra Front were designated as terrorist groups by the Security Council under resolution 1267 (1999). The two groups operate in the Syrian Arab Republic.

² The analysis for the report relied on five sources, including records provided by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic through March 2012. Of the documented killings, 85.1 per cent (162,925) of those killed were male and 9.3 per cent (17,795) were female.



However, the data did not allow for a differentiation between combatants and non-combatants.

4. Air strikes, shelling and indiscriminate barrel bomb attacks by government forces continued on opposition-held areas, notably in Aleppo and Damascus governorates, resulting in a high number of civilian casualties. In Aleppo, government forces reportedly continued their campaign of barrel bomb attacks, which has been ongoing since mid-December 2013. OHCHR received reports that at least 55 civilians, including 17 children and 7 women, were killed as a result of such attacks between 19 August and 3 September. In Damascus governorate, government forces reportedly intensified attacks against the opposition-held areas of Joubar and several locations in eastern Ghouta. Reports indicate that Joubar was subjected to dozens of air raids and heavy shelling on 2 and 3 September, resulting in the death of at least 10 civilians, while aerial bombardment by government forces reportedly killed at least 120 people and injured hundreds of people in Douma (eastern Ghouta).

5. Dar'a, Hama and Idlib governorates have also been severely affected by indiscriminate attacks by government forces. For example, in Dar'a governorate, an analysis by the Operational Satellite Applications Programme of satellite imagery collected on 5 September indicated ongoing bombardment of the city of Dar'a, most likely, in some instances, by barrel bombs. Possible damage is visible elsewhere in the city and is likely the result of conventional artillery, light air-dropped munitions or other causes. According to information gathered by OHCHR, on 30 August 2014, missile attacks by government forces on the city of Saraqib (Idlib), reportedly led to the death of at least 15 people, including 8 children and 4 women. Another reported missile attack by government forces, on 3 September, in the town of Naqir (Idlib), led to the death of five civilians. In Hama, 16 civilians were reportedly killed by shelling in Tal Khaznah.

6. Government forces also shelled and undertook airstrikes against ISIL positions in the northern and eastern parts of the country in an attempt to stop ISIL advancement towards government airbases in Rif Aleppo and Deir ez-Zor, Hasakeh and Raqqah governorates, resulting in civilian casualties. In Deir ez-Zor, government airstrikes reportedly hit a bus carrying civilians in the village of Shoula, killing at least 13 people, including 10 children. On 15 September, government airstrikes destroyed Siasyeh bridge in Deir ez-Zor city, cutting off access to an estimated 50,000 people.

7. Government-controlled cities and towns continued to be subject to indiscriminate mortar attacks, shelling and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices by armed opposition, extremist and designated terrorist groups, notably in Aleppo and Damascus governorates. For example, in Aleppo city, extensive shelling in the Khalideah residential and commercial area at the beginning of September resulted in the deaths of eight civilians, including women and children.

8. On 5 September, armed opposition groups took control of the Dokhanya and Ein Tarma suburbs of Damascus and engaged government forces in Midan and Zahira al-Jadida, located less than 2 km from the Old City. A similar operation took place in Teshrine district, north of Damascus. On 16 September, one of the main Islamic Front factions (Ajnad al-Sham) announced the beginning of a second phase of rocket attacks on the centre of Damascus.

9. According to research by Human Rights Watch released on 1 September, there is credible evidence that ISIL forces used ground-fired cluster munitions on 12 July and again on 14 August during fighting around the Syrian town of Ain al-Arab (Kobani) in Aleppo governorate, near the northern border of the Syrian Arab Republic with Turkey. Human Rights Watch also documented apparent recent use of cluster munitions by Syrian government forces, including on 21 August, on the town of Manbij in Aleppo governorate, which has been under the control of ISIL since the beginning of 2014.

10. Civilians continue to be displaced as a result of ongoing fighting and conflict. During the reporting period, displacement was recorded in areas of Hasakeh, Hama and Quneitra governorates. In Hasakeh, between 20,000 and 30,000 people were displaced as a result of the ongoing fighting in and around the Ya'robiyah, Jasaa and Gweiran neighbourhoods of Hasakeh city. The displaced have fled to other parts of Hasakeh, as well as to Qamishli. In addition, reports indicate that some 9,000 people fled four villages in Tal Hamis towards Qamishli and other locations following fighting between the People's Protection Units (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel) and other armed groups. In Hama, fighting between government forces and armed opposition groups in southern and western rural areas led to about 22,500 people fleeing to Hama city and Salamiyah and about 7,000 people to Atmeh and Karameh in Idlib governorate. Reports indicate that up to 110,000 internally displaced persons were registered for assistance in those areas during the reporting period. In Quneitra, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that more than 5,000 people were displaced towards areas in Rif Dimashq governorate to escape the ongoing fighting.

11. Parties to the conflict continued to target vital services and infrastructure. Reduced availability of water and electricity continued to be reported in various contested areas in Dar'a, Idlib, Hama, Deir ez-Zor and Rif Dimashq governorates. In Aleppo city, damage caused to the main water pumping station, Suleiman al-Halabi, by armed opposition groups on 2 June continues to result in water shortages for more than 700,000 people. While repairs to the pumping station in Aleppo have continued since 19 July, the water station pumping capacity remains low owing to electricity cuts and lack of fuel for generators. On 4 September, the armed opposition groups controlling Suleiman al-Halabi cut water supply to Aleppo for two days and are reported to have placed explosive devices in the immediate vicinity of the second pumping station. On 8 September, barrel bombs were reportedly dropped on Sakhour in Aleppo, resulting in extensive damage to the electrical transmission substation.

12. ISIL continues to increase its influence in the Syrian Arab Republic, predominantly along the main supply lines in rural central Homs, Hama, Rif Dimashq, Hasakeh and Aleppo and in areas with border crossings, natural resources and key infrastructure. During the reporting period, ISIL made advances in Deir ez-Zor, Raqqah and Aleppo governorates following clashes with government forces and armed opposition groups. In Deir ez-Zor, ISIL attacked and shelled opposition-controlled areas and government installations in the north, including Deir ez-Zor military airport and Kuweires airbase in eastern Aleppo. In Raqqah governorate, ISIL took over the Government's Tabaqa airbase on 24 August. In Hasakeh, ISIL reportedly fought the People's Protection Units in Jazeah town and surrounding areas (60 km south-east of Qamishli city), resulting in hundreds of families displaced. At the close of the reporting period, ISIL had made significant advances

in the Ain al-Arab area, which, as at 22 September, has forced 130,000 people to flee to Turkey. This is the largest influx of Syrian refugees to Turkey in such a short period of time since the beginning of the conflict in 2011.

13. About 84,000 of the 95,000 Yazidi people who were displaced to Hasakeh governorate following attacks by ISIL on the Sinjar district of Ninewa governorate in Iraq have since departed the area, using the Semalka border crossing in order to move to the Kurdish region of Iraq. As at 11 September, an estimated 4,700 arrivals from Iraq remain in the Newroz camp and approximately 3,000 are staying in the surrounding villages.

14. In Idlib governorate, on 9 September, a bomb attack killed the leader of Harakat Ahrar al-Sham al-Islamiyya, part of the Islamic Front, Hassan Abboud, along with up to 45 people, including several other leaders of the group. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

15. Although the United Nations does not have the means to independently verify numbers and origins, non-Syrian fighters, including designated terrorist groups, increasingly are participating in the fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic, on all sides of the conflict. Many analysts report that the number of foreign fighters has steadily increased since ISIL declared an Islamic caliphate and launched major offensives in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq over the past three months. Estimates range from about 200 to 300 new foreign fighters joining ISIL per month to up to 6,000 fighters in July alone. The territory encompassing the ISIL-declared Islamic caliphate is estimated to have a population of up to 9 million people.

16. There have been a number of local ceasefire agreements, as well as ongoing negotiations, between the Government and armed opposition groups. In Damascus governorate, a ceasefire agreement was reached in the Qadam and Asal areas of Damascus city on 18 August. Following the agreement, essential services started to be restored and some 4,000 civilians returned to their homes. In Yarmouk camp in Damascus, the Government recently invited armed opposition groups to form a delegation and resume direct negotiations on the implementation of the cessation of hostilities agreement that was reached on 21 June, which has to date seen no progress towards its implementation.

17. Local ceasefire negotiations are also ongoing in Rif Dimashq and Homs governorates. In Rif Dimashq, a local agreement, including a ceasefire, has reportedly been reached in Wadi Barda. Elsewhere, the Syrian armed forces and a delegation from Daraya (western Ghouta) started direct negotiations in early August on a comprehensive agreement to allow civilians to return to their homes. The negotiations continue, particularly over the issue of detainees and the surrendering of medium-sized weapons. Negotiations on a ceasefire in the Waer neighbourhood of Homs city are ongoing, although hostilities have reportedly continued.

18. On 11 September, the 45 United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) peacekeepers who had been detained by the Nusra Front since 28 August were released. All 45 peacekeepers were reportedly in good condition. The situation in UNDOF on the Syrian side and the area of separation significantly deteriorated in mid-September. Armed groups have made advances in the area of UNDOF positions, posing a direct threat to the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers along the Bravo line and in Camp Faouar. As a result, all United Nations personnel in those positions have been relocated to the Alpha side.

19. The Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, accompanied by his Deputy, Ramzy Ezzeldin Ramzy, visited Damascus from 9 to 13 September for initial discussions with government officials, opposition representatives in the Syrian Arab Republic and representatives of civil society organizations and women's groups. It was the first visit of the Special Envoy to the country since taking up his assignment on 1 September 2014. This was followed by visits to a number of regional and international capitals, including Beirut, Cairo, Paris and Ankara.

20. On 10 September, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons announced that the fact-finding mission to examine alleged uses of chlorine gas as a weapon in the Syrian Arab Republic had found information constituting "compelling confirmation" that a toxic chemical was used "systematically and repeatedly" as a weapon in Talmanes, Tamanah and Kafr Zeta in the northern part of the country earlier in 2014.

B. Human rights

21. On 27 August 2014, the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic released its eighth report (A/HRC/27/60), based on 480 interviews and evidence collected between 20 January and 15 July 2014. The commission found that government forces had continued to conduct widespread attacks on civilians, systematically committing murder, torture, rape and enforced disappearance amounting to crimes against humanity. It reported that government forces had further committed gross violations of human rights and the war crimes of murder, hostage-taking, torture, rape and sexual violence, recruiting and using children in hostilities and targeting civilians.

22. In the same report, the commission found that the armed groups named in the report, including ISIL, had committed massacres and war crimes, including murder, execution without due process, torture, hostage-taking, violations of international humanitarian law tantamount to enforced disappearance, rape and sexual violence, recruitment and use of children in hostilities and attacks on protected objects. Medical and religious personnel and journalists had been targeted. Armed groups had besieged and indiscriminately shelled civilian neighbourhoods, in some instances spreading terror among civilians through the use of car bombings in civilian areas. Notably, the commission found that, in addition to war crimes, members of ISIL had committed torture, murder, acts tantamount to enforced disappearance, and forcible displacement as part of an attack on the civilian population in Aleppo and Raqqa governorates, amounting to crimes against humanity.

23. During the reporting period, OHCHR continued to receive reports of arbitrary arrests and detentions carried out by government forces in Hama and Aleppo governorates, targeting activists. As at 11 August, the whereabouts of at least 25 activists, who were detained by government forces in July and August 2014 during door-to-door search campaigns in various parts of Aleppo governorate, remained unknown.

24. Women and children continued to be severely affected by the conflict during the reporting period. As at 17 September, about 130 of the 153 students abducted by ISIL on 29 May while travelling to Ain al-Arab, Aleppo, continued to be held by the group. Meanwhile, OHCHR received reports that a female dentist had her identification document confiscated at an ISIL checkpoint in Deir ez-Zor. According

to activists, on 19 August 2014, nearly 10 days after her disappearance, ISIL said that she had been executed, but the whereabouts of her body remain unknown. While the reasons for her disappearance remain unclear, the media has reported that she was targeted for treating male patients.

25. On 17 August 2014, ISIL took over the villages of Abu Hamam, Kashkiyeh and Ghranij in Deir ez-Zor, which are inhabited by the Sheitat tribe, after almost one month of encircling and fighting to gain control. Information gathered by OHCHR indicates that, before and during the period of encirclement, the women and children of the villages were able to leave. Reportedly, those remaining behind were mainly elderly persons and Free Syrian Army elements and affiliates from the Sheitat tribe who were defending their villages. Upon seizing the villages, ISIL reportedly executed and detained hundreds of people.

26. In addition, according to various sources, ISIL executed dozens of individuals in Deir ez-Zor, Aleppo and Raqqa governorates on charges that varied from apostasy to aiding government forces. The victims reportedly included civilians, Nusra Front fighters, and government operatives who had reportedly infiltrated the armed group. On 28 August 2014, a video was released showing that, following the takeover of Tabaqa airbase in Raqqa, ISIL executed at least 226 soldiers at the entrance of the airbase. The names and ranks were later published by ISIL.

27. ISIL targeting of media personnel continued. On 19 August, an American journalist was executed by ISIL, and an American-Israeli journalist was executed on 2 September. At least seven other media professionals are believed to be held captive by ISIL.

28. During the reporting period, ISIL reportedly issued a statement to all education and teaching institutions in Raqqa governorate, including references to abolishing the current Ministry of Education and implementing a series of structural curricular changes, such as the abolition of subjects such as history, musical and artistic education and sport.

29. The Government has indicated that between 21 August and 9 September 2014, 1,669 individuals were pardoned after surrendering themselves and their weapons and pledging not to participate in the hostilities. The Government did not provide further details on the pardons. OHCHR is not in a position to verify this information.

30. A lack of accountability continues to lead to impunity for perpetrators of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law in the Syrian Arab Republic. During the reporting period, the commission of inquiry had yet to receive any response from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to its most recent request for access to the country for the purpose of fulfilling its Human Rights Council mandate. The latest letter from the commission, dated 30 July, asking for access to the Syrian Arab Republic, was its third such request in 2014. Members of the commission of inquiry, OHCHR and United Nations human rights monitors continue to be denied access to the country.

C. Humanitarian access

31. About 10.8 million people continue to be in need of urgent humanitarian assistance within the Syrian Arab Republic, including more than 6.4 million people who are internally displaced. Some 4.7 million people reside in areas categorized as

hard to reach, including at least 241,000 people who remain besieged by either government or opposition forces.

32. United Nations agencies and partners continued to make some gains in humanitarian access during the reporting period. A record number of people were reached with food assistance in August. Deliveries across borders and across lines continued, with access across borders following the adoption of resolution 2165 (2014) resulting in broader reach to areas in Aleppo, Dar'a, Hama, Idlib, Ladhqiyyah and Quneitra governorates. There have also been openings in access across conflict lines, with some cross-line deliveries of food, health and water and sanitation supplies in Aleppo (eastern and western rural), Idlib and Rif Dimashq.

33. Despite the recent gains in humanitarian access, the delivery of humanitarian assistance to hard-to-reach areas remains challenging, primarily due to insecurity and administrative hurdles. Overall, assistance reached 77 (approximately 26.8 per cent) of the 287 locations identified as besieged or hard to reach. Food assistance by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) reached 251,808 people in 33 hard-to-reach areas compared with 469,510 people in 23 hard-to-reach locations during the previous reporting period. UNHCR, UNRWA, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Organization for Migration delivered non-food items to 104,837 people in 39 hard-to-reach areas compared with 81,151 people in 23 hard-to-reach locations during the previous reporting period. The World Health Organization (WHO) delivered medicines for approximately 183,000 people and provided water and sanitation support for approximately 88,300 people. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provided water and sanitation support for 140,000 people and nutritional support for 30,000 children in hard-to-reach areas.

34. The monitoring mechanism of the United Nations is currently operational, with one monitoring team in Turkey and one monitoring team in Jordan. The rapid establishment of the monitoring teams was possible due to the support afforded to the United Nations by the Governments of Jordan and Turkey. A second monitoring team in Turkey is being established. The deployment of the monitoring team in Iraq remains pending due to the ongoing fighting and insecurity in the north-western part of the country.

35. The United Nations and its partners have sent 14 shipments — 10 from Turkey and 4 from Jordan — to the Syrian Arab Republic under the terms of Security Council resolution 2165 (2014), using three border crossings: Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Hawa and Ramtha. This has included food assistance for more than 94,500 people; non-food items for more than 182,400 people; water and sanitation supplies for about 66,760 people; and medical supplies for more than 151,100 people, including surgical supplies for 100 people, as well as other items for 47,900 people in Aleppo, Dar'a, Hama, Idlib, Ladhqiyyah and Quneitra governorates.

36. In line with resolution 2165 (2014), the United Nations notified the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in advance of each shipment, including details about content, destination district and number of beneficiaries. Monitoring mechanism teams monitored the loading of the shipments and accompanied the loaded vehicles to the respective border crossing. In addition, for each shipment, the monitoring mechanism sent a notification to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic confirming the humanitarian nature of the shipment in accordance with resolution 2165 (2014).

37. In the light of the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Hasakeh governorate, relief items continue to be urgently needed. The items are transported through the Nusaybin/Qamishli border crossing, which is the most direct and least costly route into the governorate. The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs assured the United Nations on 17 September that the Nusaybin/Qamishli border crossing was open. The United Nations is negotiating with the authorities on further convoys. During the reporting period, UNHCR and WFP continued to organize airlifts from Damascus into Hasakeh governorate. WFP transported assistance for up to 63,000 people in August; UNHCR transported non-food items for up to 15,000 people. In addition, WHO was also able to deliver diarrhoea kits for more than 1,400 people and UNICEF airlifted supplies for more than 4,000 people in Qamishli. UNHCR has provided transportation for more than 6,000 refugees returning to Iraq.

38. During the reporting period, access to the eastern governorates of the Syrian Arab Republic continued to be severely constrained by designated terrorist groups and armed opposition groups. For example, during the August food distribution cycle, none of the planned allocation reached the 295,000 people targeted in Deir ez-Zor governorate or the 285,000 people targeted in Raqqah governorate, as a result of insecurity. While Raqqah received some assistance during the previous distribution cycle, the reporting period marks the third consecutive month that WFP has not been able to gain access to Deir ez-Zor. Furthermore, armed opposition groups, including the Islamic Front, and designated terrorist groups, including ISIL, continued to block humanitarian access to each other's areas of control. In Aleppo and northern Hasakeh, for example, ISIL continued to block humanitarian access, particularly to Kurdish areas and to villages in Deir ez-Zor not under their control.

39. Despite the difficult operating environment, agencies of the United Nations system and partners continued their efforts to deliver assistance to those in need. In August, WFP dispatched food for 4.16 million people across 12 Syrian governorates, or 98 per cent of the planned target of 4.25 million, representing a 13 per cent increase from the 3.66 million (86 per cent of the target) reached in July and the highest level achieved since the beginning of the crisis. UNICEF deliveries of chlorine benefited 16.55 million people with clean water. WHO distributed medicines and supplies for about 369,000 medical treatments.³ Between 19 August and 15 September, UNHCR dispatched core relief items benefiting more than 352,460 people in 10 governorates.

Besieged areas

40. Approximately 241,000 people remain besieged, 196,000 in areas besieged by government forces in Madamiyet Elsham, eastern Ghouta, Darayya and Yarmouk, and 45,000 in areas besieged by opposition forces in Nubul and Zahra.

41. During the reporting period, assistance, including medical assistance, reached two besieged communities: Douma (eastern Ghouta) and Yarmouk. Food was distributed to 17,508 people (7.3 per cent of people in besieged areas) and non-food items to 5,872 people (2.4 per cent); medicines were delivered sufficient for up to 76,364 people (31.7 per cent).

³ One standard treatment course (for example, a course of antibiotics for eight days) is considered as treatment for one person. Treatment courses are determined for each distribution of medicine based on international WHO standards.

42. In eastern Ghouta, 150,000 people remain besieged. On 9 September, WHO, together with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), delivered antibiotics, communicable disease medicines equivalent to 71,000 treatments and water and sanitation items, including chlorine disinfection sachets, to respond to the increasing number of typhoid cases in Douma.

43. In Madamiyet Elsham, about 24,000 people, including some 9,000 children, face a shortage of basic needs and movement constraints. No assistance reached Madamiyet Elsham during the reporting period. Humanitarian assistance last reached the area on 28 July, when WHO and SARC delivered 5 tons of medical assistance, sufficient to support the 24,000 people for two months.

44. In Darayya (Rif Dimashq), about 4,000 people remain besieged. No assistance reached Darayya during the reporting period; the area was last assisted in October 2012.

45. In Yarmouk, about 18,000 people remain besieged. UNRWA gained access to Yarmouk on 19 days during the reporting period, reaching 17,508 people with food parcels, 5,872 people with non-food items and, along with a WHO delivery, reached 5,364 people with health supplies and medicine. The distribution to Yarmouk of medical supplies, including antibiotics and a range of medicines for chronic and non-communicable diseases, as well as standard infant and early childhood vaccines, was permitted for the second consecutive month. WHO also provided water and sanitation support for 8,000 people. On 25 August, gunfire and mortars struck the vicinity of the UNRWA distribution point in Yarmouk, halting the distribution of food and health services for the day.

46. In Nubul and Zahra, about 45,000 people remain besieged by opposition forces. No humanitarian assistance has reached the two villages since 8 May.

Free passage of medical supplies, personnel and equipment

47. WHO delivered medicines and medical equipment to hard-to-reach areas in Dar'a, Rif Dimashq, Damascus and Hasakeh governorates. WHO and partners distributed medicines and supplies for approximately 183,000 medical treatments, including antibiotics and medicines for non-communicable diseases and diarrhoea kits for more than 108,000 people in Busra, Hrak and Jasem in Dar'a governorate; distributed to the besieged town of Douma in eastern Ghouta antibiotics and medicines for communicable diseases sufficient for more than 71,000 treatments, and pre-positioned Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All items for 80,000, including chlorine disinfection sachets, to respond to the increasing number of typhoid cases in the town; distributed antibiotics, medicines for chronic diseases and one diarrhoea kit for 2,650 in Yarmouk camp in Damascus; and delivered diarrhoea kits for the treatment of up to 1,400 Iraqi refugees in Qamishli.

48. A subnational level polio vaccination campaign took place from 31 August to 4 September. Preliminary results indicate that over 1 million children were reached, including in hard-to-reach areas. Three additional response campaigns are planned by the Ministry of Health, WHO and UNICEF before the end of 2014.

49. Attacks on medical facilities and personnel continued over the reporting period. During August, Physicians for Human Rights documented nine attacks on medical facilities. Three were in Aleppo governorate, two in Dar'a, two in Idlib, one in Raqqa and one in Rif Dimashq. Four were attacks by missiles and rockets, three

by barrel bombs and two by aerial bombardment with unknown weapons. Two of the seven medical facilities had previously been attacked. The deaths of 21 medical personnel were also documented. Physicians for Human Rights report that 17 personnel died from shelling or bombing, 2 died from torture and 2 were executed.

Administrative procedures

50. The implementation of the truck-sealing procedures intended to facilitate and speed up passage at checkpoints continued to slow the delivery of humanitarian assistance. In particular, delays were noted in the approval of weekly loading plans. On 26 August, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the United Nations that agencies could send the loading plans on a biweekly or monthly basis in order to simplify procedures, since weekly loading plans were creating constraints. The movement of supplies to hard-to-reach areas continued to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis through meetings of the joint committee established following the adoption of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs and security personnel centrally. This process also continued to be applicable for authorization for hard-to-reach areas from United Nations hubs at the governorate level, which previously did not require authorization at the central/national levels. In Aleppo, Hama, Homs and Idlib, the governors are implementing the new directive issued on 29 May. This has led to significant delays in the approval of some convoys.

51. On 11 September, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs notified the United Nations that regular importation of goods through the official border crossings, namely, Jdaidet Yacoub, Tartus port, Ladhqiyyah port, Naseeb and Nusaybin, could proceed to warehouses of the United Nations or of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) directly from the crossing upon authorization of the official in charge of the crossing, rather than requiring an additional facilitation letter from the Governor. Other administrative procedures continue to apply.

52. As at 17 September, 33 United Nations visas or visa renewal requests remained pending: 17 within the 15-working-day limit and 16 exceeding the 15-working-day limit. As at the same date, the number of pending visas for international NGOs stood at 17.

53. Six national NGOs were authorized to partner with agencies of the United Nations system in Damascus, Ladhqiyyah and Homs governorates during the reporting period. There are 91 national NGOs operating through 148 branches throughout the Syrian Arab Republic.

54. International NGOs continue to be unable to conduct independent (or joint) needs assessments; most cannot open sub-offices; and they are not authorized to partner with national NGOs or participate in inter-agency cross-line convoys or United Nations field missions.

Safety and security of staff and premises

55. On 13 September, ISIL executed a British aid worker. ISIL also reportedly holds a number of other aid workers.

56. On 9 September, a SARC ambulance was reportedly targeted by a sniper during a transfer of a patient along the road near Khan Eshieh from Quneitra to Damascus. No casualties were reported, although the patient was injured.

57. On 7 September, a rocket hit one of the hotels in Damascus where many agencies of the United Nations system are located and its international personnel reside, causing structural damage to the rooms but no casualties. One staff member of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was badly injured.

58. On 31 August, a missile hit another hotel in Damascus, host to a number of United Nations offices, causing material damage. No one claimed responsibility for the incident.

59. On 27 August, shells fell on a SARC-Dar'a convoy that was offloading in northern Dar'a. Four SARC staff and volunteers were injured and two trucks damaged.

60. On 25 August, gunfire and mortars struck the vicinity of the UNRWA distribution point in Yarmouk camp in Damascus, halting the distribution of food and health services.

61. On 21 August, an UNRWA staff member was killed while attempting to escape worsening insecurity in the Palestine refugee camp in Dar'a.

62. Twenty-nine United Nations national staff members, of whom 26 are UNRWA staff, continue to be detained or missing. The total number of humanitarian workers killed in the conflict since March 2011 is 63. This includes 15 United Nations staff members, 38 SARC staff members and volunteers, 7 Palestine Red Crescent Society volunteers and staff members, and 3 international NGO staff members.

III. Observations

63. I welcome the current discussions on how the international community can come together, within the context of international law, particularly international humanitarian law, to confront the scourge of terrorism and foreign terrorist fighter networks. ISIL, Jabhat al-Nusra and other groups pose a real threat to international peace and security. The past few months have seen a worrying increase in the violence and brutality civilians have had to endure in the Syrian Arab Republic, fuelled by acts of violence by ISIL and other armed groups and the continued actions of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. It is worth remembering that ISIL is a consequence, not a cause, of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Syrian conflict has deep political roots and needs to be resolved through negotiations. Absent a comprehensive political solution, humanitarian needs will spiral and the impact of terrorism and violence will continue unabated and will spill over to the region and beyond. To this end, I call upon all Member States and Syrian parties to extend full cooperation to the Special Envoy.

64. The lack of progress in finding a political solution and the continued deterioration of the security situation continues to drive increasing numbers of Syrians to take matters into their own hands by negotiating local agreements to stop the fighting. Some local ceasefires are agreed as a result of coercion and deliberate starvation; such ceasefires are not credible and should not be supported. Where local agreements have been negotiated on those terms they indicate a desperate desire to end the suffering. People want an opportunity to return to a normal life. Owing to the lack of trust between parties, many opposition interlocutors have contacted the United Nations to seek our involvement in negotiations and to act as a guarantor. I urge all sides, especially the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, to consider

cooperating with the United Nations in identifying ways to build lasting local agreements. Ensuring that local agreements meet international standards, and including relief and recovery elements in them, would help to curtail the levels of violence at a community level and contribute to a process leading to a comprehensive ceasefire and could also help to create the conditions necessary for a political settlement of the conflict.

65. The parties to the conflict have neglected, ignored and abused their international legal obligations. The selected testimonies from victims of the Syrian conflict published by the independent international commission of inquiry are a stark and gruesome reminder that violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, including those that may amount to crimes against humanity, continue to be perpetrated by government forces, anti-government armed groups and designated terrorists against the people of the Syrian Arab Republic. Civilians and those hors de combat continued to be targeted in blatant violation of international humanitarian law. The use of chemical weapons such as chlorine gas is also prohibited.

66. Security Council resolution 2165 (2014) allowed a greater opening and coherence for operations in the Syrian Arab Republic and enabled the United Nations and its partners to reach more people in need. The success of cross-border operations under the aegis of resolution 2165 (2014) has been made possible by the excellent cooperation the monitoring team of the United Nations has had with the Governments of Turkey and Jordan. I thank both Governments for their support. Access to besieged and hard-to-reach areas, however, remains limited. Violence, shifting front lines, insecurity and lack of regular, sustained and unhindered access, including administrative hurdles, mean that people in desperate need of help are not receiving adequate and regular, or — in some cases — any, assistance. Some 241,000 people still live under siege. They must have protection, food, health care and clean water. These are not luxuries to be granted but basics that the parties must allow to be delivered. The parties need to urgently lift the sieges. Humanitarian actors must also be respected, protected and allowed to reach those in need by all routes available, both across lines and across borders. And they must be able to do so safely. I remind the parties that targeting aid workers can constitute a war crime.

67. Despite the valiant efforts of humanitarian workers delivering aid at great personal risk, the Syrian Arab Republic remains the world's largest and most pressing humanitarian crisis, with regional and global implications. Needs, driven by violence, continue to outpace the response. And neighbouring countries continue to host large numbers of refugees.

68. The solution to the crisis can be found only through a political resolution, and I appeal to the parties and the international community to do much more to take the courageous — and long overdue — steps needed to resolve the crisis.

Annex

Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014): available data

1. Protection of civilians^a

Examples of attacks on civilian facilities (schools, hospitals, camps, places of worship)

- As at 17 September, approximately 130 of the 153 students kidnapped by ISIL on 29 May while on the road to Ain al-Arab continue to be held.
- On 11 September, air strikes reportedly hit a sheep market in Bab, Aleppo, killing 11 people.
- On 7 September, air strikes reportedly hit a bakery in Raqqa city, killing some 25 people.
- On 31 August, barrel bombs reportedly fell on Nabd Horan hospital in Dar'a governorate.
- On 27 August, barrel bombs reportedly fell on Rafas hospital in Dar'a governorate.
- On 21 August, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) issued a statement following an attack on a school in the Waer neighbourhood of Homs, in which one prefabricated classroom was destroyed and two others damaged in a mortar attack on 15 August.

Large-scale impact of conflict on public services

- The conflict continued to disrupt health-care services. Hospitals have been damaged in 12 of the country's 14 governorates. Out of 97 Ministry of Health hospitals:
 - 41 per cent are reported as fully functioning; 35 per cent are reported as partially functioning; and 24 per cent are reported as not functioning at all.
 - 71 per cent are reported as accessible to patients seeking treatment, while 29 per cent are not accessible owing to insecurity.
- People in Aleppo city still reportedly face difficulties in gaining regular access to safe water supplies following damage caused to water, sewage and electrical networks by an explosion on 2 June. Water supplies were restored to Aleppo city on 6 September after two days of complete water cut, with water now reportedly rationed.
- The electricity supply was reportedly restored to Waer in early September after months of blackout.
- An attack on 18 August reportedly damaged the water plant in Raqqa city, resulting in cuts to the water supply.

^a The United Nations has a distinct and regular mechanism of reporting on the six grave violations against children in armed conflict that has set verification standards and periodicity of reporting to identify trends.

2. Safe and unhindered humanitarian access to people in need

Hard-to-reach areas

- Latest estimates indicate that 4.7 million people are located in "hard-to-reach" areas and in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.
- Food assistance was provided to 251,808 people during the reporting period in hard-to-reach areas (207,300 by the World Food Programme (WFP) and 44,508 by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)).
- Non-food items were provided to 104,837 people in hard-to-reach areas (86,161 by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 5,872 by UNRWA, 2,000 by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and 10,804 by the International Organization for Migration).
- UNICEF reached 140,142 people with water, sanitation and hygiene items. The World Health Organization (WHO) dispatched water, sanitation and hygiene support for up to 80,000 people in Douma, eastern Ghouta area and 8,000 people in Yarmouk.
- UNICEF provided 14,390 children with educational support in hard-to-reach areas.
- UNICEF and partners provided high-energy biscuits for up to 10,000 children in Idlib governorate and for 20,000 children in Qamishli governorate.
- WHO provided supplies for 71,000 medical treatments to Douma, eastern Ghouta, and 108,000 medical supplies and treatments in Busra, Hrak and Jasem in Dar'a governorate. It also provided support for medical treatments for 2,650 people in Yarmouk camp. UNICEF supplied three health kits to cover primary health-care needs of 30,000 internally displaced persons and host communities for three months in Harim (rural Idlib).

Inter-agency cross-line convoys

- Two inter-agency convoys took place during the reporting period:
 - On 25 August, a joint United Nations convoy reached Harim district of Idlib governorate with supplies for up to 12,500 people for distribution in the Qah camp.
 - On 15 September, the first of two convoys to Houla targeted 30,000 people in Taldo and Qabo villages. The second part of the convoy is scheduled for 22 September, targeting 16,000 people.
- On 9 September, in a meeting of the joint committee established following the adoption of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), the Government requested the United Nations, in writing, to dispatch a convoy to Adra al-Badad and Adra Umaliya. Planning is under way for the convoy. On 16 September approval was received for a convoy to Harasta in rural Damascus.
- Five inter-agency convoys were requested but did not take place during the reporting period:

- An inter-agency convoy to Douma scheduled for 18-21 August and targeting 5,000 families did not take place, as there was no response by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the request.
- An inter-agency convoy to Douma scheduled for 25-28 August and targeting 5,000 families did not take place, as there was no response by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the request.
- An inter-agency convoy to eastern Ghouta scheduled for 4 September and targeting 1,000 families did not take place, as there was no response by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the request.
- Despite Government approval, an inter-agency convoy to Adra al-Badad and Adra Umaliya, Rif Dimashq scheduled for 19-22 August did not take place, as there was no agreement on the route.
- On 15 September, a planned convoy to Ehsem (Idlib governorate) targeting 8,750 people did not proceed owing to the intensification of fighting in the area and the lack of final approval by authorities. Discussions with government authorities are ongoing.

Besieged areas

- In total, 241,000 people remain besieged.
- During the reporting period, food assistance was distributed to 17,508 people, or 7.3 per cent of those besieged; non-food items were distributed to 5,872 people, or 2.4 per cent; and medical assistance was distributed to 76,364 people, or 31.7 per cent of people in besieged areas.
- UNRWA delivered food assistance to 17,508 people in Yarmouk camp, non-food items to 5,872 people and medical assistance to 2,714 people. In addition, WHO dispatched medicines and supplies to Yarmouk for 2,650 treatments. Water purification supplies were also sent to Yarmouk for 8,000 treatments.
- WHO undertook a delivery to Douma, eastern Ghouta, on 9 September, with 71,000 treatments and pre-positioned Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All items for 80,000.

Cross-border assistance

According to the Turkish Red Crescent Society, humanitarian actors have channelled about \$23 million worth of humanitarian assistance on average monthly from Turkey into the Syrian Arab Republic through the zero-point delivery system administered by the Society. This monthly average does not include assistance delivered by commercial or other channels.

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2165 (2014)

The United Nations and its partners have sent 14 shipments — 10 from Turkey and 4 from Jordan — to the Syrian Arab Republic under the terms of Security Council resolution 2165 (2014), using three border crossings: Bab al-Hawa, Bab al-Salam and Ramtha. This has included food assistance for more than 94,500 people; non-food items for more than 182,400 people; water and sanitation supplies for about 66,760 people; and medical supplies for more than 151,100 people, including

surgical supplies for 100 people, as well as other items for 47,900 people in Aleppo, Dar'a, Hama, Idlib, Ladhqiyyah and Quneitra governorates.

Safety of humanitarian workers

- The number of humanitarian workers killed in the conflict since March 2011 stands at 63, including 15 United Nations staff, 38 Syrian Arab Red Crescent staff and volunteers, 7 Palestine Red Crescent Society volunteers and staff, and 3 international non-governmental organization (NGO) staff.
- 29 United Nations national staff members, of whom 26 are UNRWA staff, continue to be detained or missing.

Declaration of commitment

A total of 28 armed opposition groups have signed the declaration of commitment, affirming their core responsibilities under international humanitarian law and their commitment to facilitate action to meet the needs of civilians on the basis of need alone. Of the 28 signatories, four groups signed during the reporting period:

- Jabhat Thuwar Saraqeb Wa Reefha, on 1 September
- Harakat Tahreer Homs, on 3 September
- Faylaq Homs, on 4 September
- Hayat Duru' al-Thawra, on 5 September

3. Safe passage of medical personnel and supplies

Attacks on medical facilities during the reporting period

- Physicians for Human Rights documented nine attacks on medical facilities in August. Three were in Aleppo governorate, two in Dar'a, two in Idlib, one in Raqqqa, and one in Rif Dimashq. Four were reportedly attacks by missiles and rockets, three by barrel bombs and two by aerial bombardment with unknown weapons. Two attacks were on facilities that have previously been attacked.
- In total, Physicians for Human Rights has documented 195 attacks on 155 separate medical facilities since the start of the conflict.
- Physicians for Human Rights documented that 21 medical personnel were killed in August. Seventeen personnel reportedly died from shelling or bombing, two died from torture and two were executed. Overall, the organization has recorded the deaths of 561 medical personnel since the start of the conflict.

Removal of medicines and medical supplies from convoys

Access continues to be hampered by the deterioration of the security context, the fluidity of the population and constraints imposed on humanitarian operations by the Syrian Government.

Polio vaccination campaign

The preliminary report from the most recent campaign conducted at the subnational level between 31 August and 4 September reveals that more than 1 million

children have been reached, including in hard-to-reach areas. However, access was not permitted to Ain al-Arab in Aleppo governorate or Waer in Homs governorate.

4. Administrative hurdles

- On 9 June, the Ministry of Social Affairs communicated to governors that all convoys or missions to "hot spot areas"^b required the approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the High Relief Committee and the National Security Office. Previously, the governors were delegated to coordinate and authorize delivery of assistance within their respective governorates, including across lines of conflict. Delivery of assistance to cross-line locations continues to be hampered as a result of the directive.
- On 7 July, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs communicated a time frame for submitting the weekly loading plans in accordance with the truck-sealing procedures rolled out for the movement of trucks for regular programmes: loading plans are to be submitted by agencies of the United Nations system each Monday during working hours. The Government has committed to clear the weekly loading plans on Thursdays for distributions to start on Saturdays.
- An exemption was obtained with respect to the distribution of medicines, medical equipment and water, sanitation and hygiene items for regular programmes. The distribution of such items will be exempted from some of the new procedures rolled out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in April and May. The distribution of medical aid for cross-line deliveries will be coordinated by the Ministry of Health on a case-by-case basis.
- On 26 August, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the United Nations that agencies could send the loading plans on a biweekly or monthly basis in order to simplify procedures, since weekly loading plans were creating constraints.
- On 11 September, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs notified the United Nations that regular importation of goods through the official border crossings, namely Jdaidet Yacoub, Tartus port, Ladhqiyyah port, Naseeb and Nusaybin, could proceed to United Nations or international-NGO warehouses directly from the crossing upon authorization of the official in charge of the crossing, rather than requiring an additional facilitation letter from the Governor. Other administrative procedures continue to apply.

Clearance procedures for telecommunications equipment

Government approvals to import and operate information and communications technology equipment remain a lengthy process. In the reporting period, UNHCR staff on a pre-approved list received licences to use Thuraya handheld devices in public. The equipment approved during the previous reporting period has been distributed and installed. The VSAT for Qamishli was approved and is pending customs clearance.

^b The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic refers to "hot spots". Clarification was requested by the United Nations on 16 July for the definition and criteria of "hot spots" but has not been received. For the purpose of the present report, these are referred to as hard-to-reach areas until clarified because of the difficulty in reaching these locations.

Empowered interlocutors

- *Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.* The joint United Nations and Government of the Syrian Arab Republic committee established following the adoption of resolution 2139 (2014) includes a security focal point. Regular meetings are held between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Humanitarian Coordinator on an almost daily basis.
- The opposition is still unable to designate empowered interlocutors. The fragmented nature of the opposition makes it difficult to clearly identify an interlocutor for armed opposition groups. Ad hoc local engagement is ongoing to negotiate access. Interlocutors vary depending on the localities where access is being negotiated.

Visas

- The revised visa policy established by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic on 4 March continued to be implemented. As at 17 September, 33 United Nations visas or renewal requests remained pending, 17 within the 15-working-day limit and 16 exceeding the 15-working-day limit.
- As at 17 September, the number of pending visas for international NGOs stood at 17. During the reporting period three new visa requests were granted, five new visa requests made, and two requests cancelled as the individuals' contracts with the NGOs had expired while awaiting the issuance of visas.

Humanitarian hubs and presence

- UNHCR continues to work on security enhancements in newly established offices in Damascus (a third building in Damascus), Sweida and Qamishli.
- UNICEF has strengthened its presence in Aleppo and Qamishli in response to the increasing needs in these areas.

International non-governmental organization partners

- The number of international NGOs approved to work in the Syrian Arab Republic stands at 16.
- International NGOs are still not authorized to work directly with national NGOs and are not allowed to accompany United Nations convoys.
- There was no progress in the revision of the standard memorandum of understanding for international NGOs with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and line ministries.

National non-governmental organization partners

- The number of national NGOs authorized to partner with the United Nations stands at 91, operating through 148 branches.
- Six new national NGOs were authorized during the reporting period: three in Damascus governorate, two in Homs governorate and one in Ladhqiyyah governorate.

5. Funding

- A total of \$530 million of funding for the Syrian crisis was registered during the reporting period. Of that amount, \$199.6 million was for activities inside the Syrian Arab Republic and \$330.4 million was for support to Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries.
- Of the total amount reported for the Syrian Arab Republic during the reporting period, 23.5 per cent (\$46.8 million) was for activities included in the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan. For neighbouring countries, 81.7 per cent (\$269.9 million) of the amount reported was for activities included in the Syria Regional Refugee Response Plan.
- As at 17 September, the total funding for the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan and the Syria Regional Refugee Response Plan stood at 46 per cent (\$6.02 billion requested, \$2.76 billion received). The Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan is 33 per cent funded and the Syria Regional Refugee Response Plan is 53 per cent funded.

6. Overview of United Nations humanitarian response

Food assistance

- In August, food for a record 4.16 million people — 98 per cent of the monthly target — was dispatched by WFP to partners inside the Syrian Arab Republic, marking a 13 per cent increase since the July cycle and the highest level achieved since the beginning of the crisis.
- Of the total assistance dispatched in August, 87.5 per cent was delivered through regular programme operations and 11 per cent through cross-line missions, while a further 1.5 per cent was included in four cross-border trans-shipments.
- Access to the north-eastern governorates continues to be restricted by ongoing violence and the presence of armed groups blocking main access routes. Supplies that were not able to reach their planned destinations were redirected to support areas where escalating needs were reported by partners on the ground or to hard-to-reach areas where windows of opportunity opened up.
- Between 1 and 14 September, WFP reached over 2 million people with food assistance.

Core relief items and shelter

- UNHCR dispatched core relief items for more than 352,460 people in 10 governorates between 19 August and 15 September. In total, more than 3.25 million people have received core relief items in 13 of the 14 governorates since the beginning of the year. UNHCR has reached 620,749 individuals in 95 hard-to-reach and besieged areas since the beginning of the year.
- The International Organization for Migration reached another 47,500 people with non-food items during the reporting period.
- So far in 2014, UNHCR has completed the rehabilitation of collective shelters in six governorates, benefiting 11,103 people. In addition, private shelters have been upgraded for 24,176 people in Homs, Rif Dimashq and Aleppo governorates.

Health

- Through its regular programme, WHO distributed medicines and supplies for approximately 97,733 medical treatments^c during the present reporting period in Aleppo, Idlib, Rif Dimashq, Ladhqiyyah and Damascus governorates.
- UNICEF and partners supported nearly 60,000 women and children in accessing basic health-care services.
- UNFPA continued to support its implementing partners to deliver life-saving reproductive health services through 28 mobile clinics, 27 static clinics and 13 medical points in Damascus, Rif Dimashq, Homs, Aleppo, Deir ez-Zor, Raqqa, Hama, Dar'a, Tartus and Ladhqiyyah governorates. Approximately 23,000 women received reproductive health services during the reporting period, including 5,500 who benefited from family planning services; and 540 pregnant women were referred for delivery services using reproductive health vouchers.
- UNHCR continues to provide medical equipment, medicines and support to 13 primary health-care clinics in Damascus, Rif Dimashq, Homs, Tartus, Aleppo and Hasakeh governorates.

Nutrition

- UNICEF and partners provided high-energy biscuits sufficient for 30,000 children in Newroz camp and Idlib.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

- During the reporting period, UNICEF reached an estimated 16.55 million people with access to safe water through the supply of sodium hypochlorite; 42 per cent of people assisted are in non-government-controlled areas.
- Approximately 44,000 women and children benefited from hygiene supplies and promotion.

Education

- During the reporting period, UNICEF reached 14,390 boys and girls with remedial education in Deir ez-Zor and Homs.
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF has launched the "Back to learning" campaign for the 2014/15 school year, targeting 1 million children, of whom 45 per cent are in hard-to-reach areas.

Palestine refugees

- Through regular programming, UNRWA provided food assistance to 223,920 people; health consultations to 77,357 people; cash assistance to 45,456 people; 422 new microfinance loans; and water, sanitation and hygiene/shelter support to 13,743 people.

^c One standard treatment course (for example, a course of antibiotics for eight days) is considered as treatment for one person. Treatment courses are determined for each medicine distribution based on international WHO standards.

Agriculture

- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations provided agricultural support to 1,757 people in Idlib governorate, including 266 in hard-to-reach areas. The delivery of seeds has begun in Raqqah governorate.

Protection and community services

- UNHCR continued its protection monitoring activities through staff on the ground in seven key locations; 17 community centres; partnerships with organizations; and outreach volunteers.
- UNFPA and partners provided 10,304 women with psychosocial support and psychological first aid services in Damascus, Rif Dimashq, Homs, Aleppo, Deir ez-Zor, Raqqah, Hama, Dar'a, Tartus and Ladhqiyyah governorates. In addition, 1,762 women and girls were screened for gender-based violence; of those, 568 survivors of gender-based violence received specialized services, including medical counselling.
- UNICEF, in cooperation with local NGOs, provided psychosocial support for 13,871 children in Damascus, Rif Dimashq, Dar'a, Quneitra, Tartus, Ladhqiyyah, Sweida, Idlib, Deir ez-Zor, Hama and Homs governorates. Educational sessions on mine-risk awareness were prepared for over 200,000 people.

Response to the Iraqi refugee crisis in Hasakeh governorate

- The large-scale arrival of an estimated 95,000 Yazidi people from Iraq has stabilized. The large majority (an estimated 84,000 persons) of those who entered the Syrian Arab Republic through the Yarubiyah border crossing from Iraq have since departed, using the Semalka border crossing that allows them to move to the Kurdish region of Iraq. An estimated 4,700 new arrivals from Iraq remain in the Newroz camp and approximately 3,000 stay in the surrounding villages. On 1 September, with the influx stabilized, UNHCR started its identification exercise, which is aimed at ascertaining the camp population for planning and assistance delivery. The vast majority of the camp population have received non-food items and other support.
- UNICEF is supporting water and sanitation services for 7,000 people and providing psychosocial support to children in the camp. WHO provided two diarrhoea kits for treatment of up to 1,400 Iraqi refugees. WFP has distributed a total of 2,400 ready-to-eat meals to Iraqi refugees hosted in Newroz camp.

**Security Council**

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Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region**I. Introduction**

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2147 (2014), in which the Council requested me to report to it on the implementation by the Democratic Republic of the Congo of its commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.¹ The report covers developments since the issuance of my report of 5 March 2014 (S/2014/153) and describes recent peace and security initiatives with regard to eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region prior to 31 August. The report contains information on progress made in advancing the objectives of the Framework, including measures taken by relevant stakeholders to implement the regional plan of action adopted by Heads of State in Addis Ababa on 31 January 2014.

II. Recent developments**A. Political and security developments**

2. Although some progress has been achieved in the implementation of the Framework since my previous report, several obstacles continue to obstruct its full implementation. On the political and security fronts, while the general security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has generally improved, lack of trust between neighbouring countries, the activities of several armed groups and slow progress in the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations (the Kampala Dialogue outcome documents signed in Nairobi on 12 December 2013 by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the former rebel group

¹ In this context, the region is defined as covering the 13 signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, namely, Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. In addition, the following four intergovernmental organizations act as guarantors for the Framework: the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Southern African Development Community and the United Nations. For further information, see S/2013/119 and S/2013/131, annex.



Movement of 23 March (M23)) continue to threaten long-term stability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and undermine bilateral relations between some countries in the region.

3. On 17 July, I appointed Said Djinnit to be my new Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region. Mr. Djinnit replaced Mary Robinson, who has accepted new responsibilities as my Special Envoy for Climate Change.

4. On 18 April, in a letter addressed to Heads of State and other high-level officials in the region, including the Chairperson of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and my Special Envoy, the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) announced their readiness to surrender and demanded an inter-Rwandan dialogue as a condition for disarming. They reiterated their demand in a letter to the Security Council on 4 August. As at 31 August, only 103 FDLR combatants and 202 dependants had surrendered in North Kivu, handing over 102 weapons, while 83 combatants with 236 dependants had disarmed in South Kivu, handing over 83 weapons. Those individuals are currently in two transit camps run by MONUSCO, one in Kanyabayonga (North Kivu) and the other in Walungu (South Kivu).

5. The President of Angola, José Eduardo dos Santos, in his role as Chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), has been leading regional efforts to build consensus on the eradication of armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. To reinforce regional resolve on the issue, on 1 June a team of my special envoys and special representatives comprising my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United States Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, the African Union Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region and the European Union Senior Coordinator for the Great Lakes Region issued a joint statement calling for the complete and unconditional surrender of FDLR and demanding accountability for FDLR combatants suspected of serious crimes. In the statement they noted that the surrender of limited numbers of low-ranking combatants was not encouraging and called for military action against the armed group, in the absence of a credible surrender and disarmament process.

6. At the initiative of the United States Special Envoy, the team of special envoys and special representatives met FDLR representatives in Rome on 26 June, under the auspices of the Community of Sant'Egidio. The special envoys and special representatives took that opportunity to reiterate their demand for the complete and unconditional disarmament of FDLR. They made it clear that the disarmament process should result in the complete dismantling of the organization and the surrender of its senior commanders, within the context of ongoing efforts aimed at the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, repatriation or resettlement of foreign armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They reiterated the need to hold accountable those suspected of serious crimes. A delegation of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo led by the Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Célestin Tunda ya Kasende, participated in the meeting.

7. Against the background of the new dynamic generated by the FDLR voluntary disarmament process, ministers of foreign affairs and defence of States members ICGLR and SADC held a joint ministerial meeting in Luanda on 2 July. The participants in the meeting discussed, in addition to the FDLR issue, the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations. Also on the agenda was the escalation

of tensions between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. My Special Envoy conveyed to the ministers the importance of a unified regional approach to addressing those challenges. Following deliberations, the ministers issued a joint communiqué in which, *inter alia*, they urged FDLR to disarm within six months and scheduled a midterm review of the process in October. These positions were reiterated during an ICGLR mini-summit held in Luanda on 14 August. The mini-summit was convened by the President of Angola and attended by: the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Joseph Kabila; the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni; the Minister of State for Transport, Civil Aviation and the Merchant Marine of the Congo, Rudolphe Adada; the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Rwanda, Louise Mushikiwabo; and the Minister of Defence and National Service of the United Republic of Tanzania, Hussein Ali Mwinyi. Participants in the mini-summit gave FDLR a six-month ultimatum to disarm and decided to plan military actions against the group in the absence of progress by the midterm review in October. They also proposed that a joint ICGLR-SADC summit be held in October to review the disarmament process and decide on a course of action. The six-month time frame for FDLR disarmament was endorsed at the thirty-fourth Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government, held in Pretoria on 17 and 18 August.

8. Meanwhile, the pace of implementation of the Nairobi Declarations has remained generally slow. In my previous report, I welcomed the promulgation by the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on 11 February 2014, of an amnesty law, as stipulated in the Nairobi Declarations. After months of delay, I am pleased to report that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has sent a technical team to Uganda and Rwanda, in April and July respectively, to identify and process some 2,000 former M23 members who had fled to those countries in 2013. In the presence of representatives of the Office of my Special Envoy, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and ICGLR, the Government delegation held constructive discussions with the former combatants and the Ugandan and Rwandan authorities on how to grant amnesty and repatriate those individuals and their dependants. The Congolese delegation also registered the former combatants who were present in their cantonments at the time of the visit.

9. The relevant institutions in Kinshasa are now processing the data collected during the visits of the technical team to Rwanda and Uganda. In that regard, I welcome the flexibility demonstrated by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo during an informal ministerial meeting held in New York on 7 August. At the meeting, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo suggested that the Government would still be willing to consider the applications of former M23 combatants after the expiration of the mid-August deadline set in the amnesty law, as they were not responsible for delays in the handling of their cases. Proper handling of the amnesty and repatriation process will contribute to restoring trust between the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. It will also facilitate progress in the implementation of other critical provisions of the Nairobi Declarations.

10. On the security front, clashes occurred between the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo — FARDC) and the armed forces of Rwanda (Rwanda Defence Force —

RDF) in the border area of Kibumba, North Kivu, on 11 June. The incident, the first military confrontation between the two countries in years, resulted in casualties on both sides. Both my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region and my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo urged the parties to exercise restraint and to de-escalate tensions. The rapid intervention of the ICGLR Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism enabled an investigation into the incident to be conducted, at the request of both countries.

11. In its findings, the Mechanism noted that the deployment of the two national armed forces in close proximity to each other along the porous border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda was a significant trigger of conflict, especially given the acrimony that exists between the two countries. The findings also indicated that it was likely that further confrontations would occur unless urgent measures were taken to address the situation. In that regard, the Mechanism recommended that the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda avoid deploying their armed forces in close proximity to one another, especially in contentious border areas.

12. With regard to foreign and local armed groups still operating in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Congolese armed forces, supported by MONUSCO, have continued to carry out military operations against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain, as indicated in my past two reports on MONUSCO (S/2014/450 and S/2014/698). While the capacity of ADF to cause harm has been reduced, the group remains active and mobile, in particular in Ituri district (Orientale Province) and has continued to attack the national armed forces, which suffered their heaviest loss on 1 May, when 26 soldiers were killed in an ADF ambush north-east of Beni, North Kivu.

B. Humanitarian situation

13. The humanitarian situation throughout the region and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains challenging owing to the continued high numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, despite continued efforts to improve the lives of populations in conflict-affected areas, some 6.3 million people, of whom an estimated 2.6 million were internally displaced, were still in need of assistance at the time of finalizing the present report. While humanitarian entities have continued to provide vital aid to millions of people, the resources available for humanitarian operations continue to fall seriously short of existing needs. The humanitarian response plan for the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains critically underfunded, having received only 35 per cent of the \$839 million required.

14. The defeat of M23 in November 2013, which brought relative stability to some areas of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, generated hope that some refugees and internally displaced persons would return to their places of origin. Indeed, 1.8 million internally displaced persons returned to their homes between November 2012 and May 2014. Furthermore, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has reported a decrease of 40 per cent in the number of persons in displacement camps around Goma between November 2013 and May 2014.

15. Nonetheless, the activities of armed groups have caused new waves of displacement, as many refugees and internally displaced persons continue to fear for their safety. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, over 492,000 people have been newly displaced since January 2014, including 125,000 in North Kivu and 140,000 in Katanga. Katanga is the province with the highest increase in displacements since December 2013. The displacements in Katanga are due to clashes between the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and armed groups, and growing tensions between the Pygmy and Luba communities. Food insecurity is worsening and human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence, are still commonplace. The Office estimates that some 75,000 children in the Katanga conflict zone will face acute malnutrition in 2014.

16. In many camps for displaced persons in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, only the most vulnerable have received food assistance over the past six months. The decision to target the most vulnerable was taken after an exercise was carried out at all sites where internally displaced persons had been living and receiving food assistance, some of them for as long as three years. In parallel, the World Food Programme (WFP) made it a priority to provide resources to newly displaced people, in line with their vulnerability status. The prioritization plan was dictated by the need to direct limited financial resources towards life-saving relief activities. The ability of WFP to provide assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and many other countries has been challenged by an increase in the need for food assistance due to the unprecedented number of large-scale and simultaneous emergencies that occurred in 2013 and 2014, including in countries such as the Syrian Arab Republic and the Central African Republic.

17. In addition to the relatively large size of the internally displaced population in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, approximately 432,500 Congolese refugees currently live in neighbouring countries, an indication that persistent insecurity and a failure to eliminate the root causes of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continue to hinder lasting voluntary returns. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), however, reports that, despite these challenges, over 182,000 Congolese refugees returned to their country between 2011 and 30 June 2014. In addition, since the beginning of 2014 Congolese refugees who arrived in Uganda over the past year also began to return spontaneously to the Beni area. The fact that the Democratic Republic of the Congo itself is host to 118,000 refugees from neighbouring countries exacerbates the country's already difficult humanitarian situation.

18. In accordance with international refugee law and pursuant to the Congolese refugee law of 2002, Rwandan refugees and asylum seekers of all nationalities residing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo fall under the mandate of the Government and UNHCR. The UNHCR comprehensive strategy for the Rwandan refugee situation addresses the particular situation of Rwandan refugees who entered the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire) between 1959 and 1998 and recommends that all aspects leading to a cessation of refugee status (including exemption procedures) for Rwandans who fall in the aforementioned category be implemented progressively. UNHCR works with the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda within the framework of tripartite agreements that uphold the voluntary character of returns while advancing the implementation of durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation and local

integration of Congolese and Rwandan refugees. To date, 133,862 Rwandan refugees have voluntarily returned to Rwanda from the Democratic Republic of the Congo; 2,552 of them did so in 2014.

C. Update on human rights and sexual and gender-based violence

19. The activities of armed groups and some elements of the security forces remain a serious cause for concern on the human rights front. The political space remains constrained, human rights violations continue in several countries in the region and more efforts are needed to tackle impunity. Violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including sexual and gender-based violence, have continued in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in other States signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. There are strong indications that violations are being committed by all parties without exception. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, armed groups and members of the Congolese defence and security forces continue to commit rape as a weapon of war, along with other forms of sexual violence and human rights violations, during and after rebel attacks on communities.

20. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in May 2014, the Operational Military Court handed down its decision in the Minova case, in which 39 officers of the national armed forces were charged with rape and other war crimes. Specifically, the officers were charged with the rape of more than 130 women and girls in Minova, South Kivu. The trial is viewed as a test of the Government's ability to fight impunity and encourage a culture of accountability for conflict-related sexual violence, crimes against humanity and war crimes. While only two low-level soldiers were convicted of rape, the judgement offered constructive lessons for the prosecution of atrocities in the region in the future.

21. There continue to be calls within the Democratic Republic of the Congo for a specialized chamber to try war crimes, crimes against humanity and conflict-related sexual violence. Such specialized mechanisms can be highly effective in prosecuting alleged perpetrators of international crimes. On 2 May 2014, a bill creating a specialized, mixed chamber was formally received by the Parliament but sent back to the Government owing to constitutional concerns raised by the National Assembly. The Minister of Justice and Human Rights has indicated that a revised bill will soon be considered.

22. On 8 July 2014, the Parliament of the Democratic Republic of the Congo passed a law (No. 14/025) allowing the ratification of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, adopted on 22 October 2009 in Kampala. I welcome this development and encourage the Congolese authorities to take further steps to protect all persons displaced in their country.

III. Implementation of the commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region

A. Commitments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

23. During the reporting period, limited progress was achieved in the implementation of the national commitments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My report on MONUSCO of 25 September 2014 (S/2014/698) contains further information on the modest advances made in that regard.

24. With the support of MONUSCO and international partners, the National Oversight Mechanism developed benchmarks, indicators of progress and priority actions for the six national commitments set out in the Framework, through a participatory process involving national and provincial administrations, civil society and international partners. On 12 July, participants in a national seminar organized by the Mechanism and the Ministry of Planning endorsed a matrix comprising more than 50 benchmarks and more than 300 indicators. Among the participants were the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for the Budget, Daniel Mukoko Samba, along with other officials and representatives of the United Nations, the diplomatic corps, civil society and the private sector. The benchmarking process has strengthened the partnership between the Mechanism, the Ministry of Planning and the international community, which will help in identifying activities to be included in the 2015 budget.

25. During the reporting period, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo approved its national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan, estimated to cost \$85 million. On 11 July, the Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, Alexandre Ntambo, shared the plan with the diplomatic corps to seek financial support from donors. During the meeting, the Minister also announced that the Government would contribute \$10 million to the plan. MONUSCO has pledged \$8 million for the identification of former combatants and the provision of food supplies to demobilized armed groups still in transit camps. Notwithstanding the finalization of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan, the development of benchmarks and other modest achievements, some critical aspects of the national commitments have yet to be implemented. These include sustained security sector reform, consolidation of State authority, decentralization, economic development, reconciliation and democratization.

B. Commitments of the countries in the region

26. Despite persistent challenges to the stabilization of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and in relations between countries in the region, leaders in the region have continued to take ownership of and interest in advancing the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. By and large, the countries in the region have continued to adhere to their commitments, in particular those related to non-interference in the internal affairs of neighbouring countries and assistance or support to armed groups, despite unverified reports to the contrary. The verification activities of the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism continue to be critical. While regional and economic cooperation has increased among countries in the region, much more needs to be done to enhance

the administration of justice through regional judicial cooperation and to ensure that those who have committed war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts of genocide or crimes of aggression, or persons targeted by United Nations sanctions, are held accountable.

27. As noted above, the President of Angola, as Chair of ICGLR, has helped to bring together the States members of ICGLR and SADC, the two organizations in the region that are key for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. In his capacity as Chair, the President has convened one ordinary summit, three mini-summits and a number of ministerial meetings to discuss issues related to the objectives of the Framework. During those events, States members of ICGLR and SADC sought solutions for the neutralization of armed groups operating in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations and the improvement of relations between some countries, among other key pending issues. In addition, Angola has strengthened relations with countries in the region in order to push ahead its agenda for peace, security and economic affairs. On 15 May, the Minister of External Relations of Angola, George Chikoti, visited Kigali, where he and his Rwandan counterpart co-signed a general cooperation agreement, an agreement on a joint cooperation commission and a memorandum of understanding. The documents aim to regularize political and economic relations between the two countries.

28. Regional cooperation in the context of the northern corridor integration projects and the East African Community was also reinforced during the reporting period. On 24 June, the Governments of Rwanda and Uganda signed a service contract for the development of the Kampala-Kigali portion of the northern corridor railway project. The agreement was reached after a decision had been taken earlier in 2014 by Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda to enter into a tripartite arrangement to accelerate regional integration. The development is part of the planned construction of a railway connection along the northern corridor between Mombasa, Kenya, and Kampala through Nairobi and Kigali, with a possible extension to Juba. The project is expected to be completed by March 2018. On 2 July, the ministers of economy, finance, foreign affairs and infrastructure of Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda met with the Secretary-General of the East African Community in Kigali to discuss ongoing northern corridor integration projects, including in the areas of infrastructure, transport, commodity exchange, human resources capacity-building, air space management and crude oil pipeline development. The next summit of the northern corridor countries is scheduled to be held in Kampala in September 2014.

29. During the reporting period, the Technical Support Committee of the Regional Oversight Mechanism also met regularly in Nairobi, under the co-chairmanship of the Special Adviser to my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Modibo I. Toure, and the African Union Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, Boubacar Diarra. The Technical Support Committee held its seventh meeting in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, from 20 to 22 May, with the support of MONUSCO, the Congolese authorities and the Office of my Special Envoy. While in North Kivu, the members of the Committee visited a camp for internally displaced persons, a police training centre and a *centre de regroupement* administered by the national armed forces in Mubambiro, which hosts about 420 former combatants from various armed groups. These field visits enabled Committee members to gain a better understanding of the situation on the ground

and, therefore, to better advise their respective Governments. The Committee also suggested ways to strengthen the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism, accelerate the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, neutralize illegal armed groups operating in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and reinsert former combatants into civilian life.

30. While multilateral and bilateral cooperation has improved in the region during the reporting period, much more needs to be done to rebuild trust among the core signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and accelerate the implementation of the regional plan of action. My Special Envoy and the African Union Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region have prepared a report with key recommendations on ways to boost the implementation of that plan of action. The report, which takes into account the work of the Technical Support Committee, was submitted to the Regional Oversight Mechanism at its fourth high-level meeting, held on 22 September in New York in the margins of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

C. International commitments

31. On 11 June, in collaboration with the United Nations Global Compact, my Special Envoy convened a private sector responsible investment round table in Addis Ababa that was attended by over 100 participants from the private sector, civil society, academia and government, as well as other representatives from the region. It was one in a series of steps designed to raise the awareness of stakeholders on the issue of investment in the Great Lakes region, in preparation for a private sector investment conference to be held in the first quarter of 2015. The round table also provided a regional platform for dialogue between the public and private sectors on the issue of investment in the States signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

32. An investment opportunity brief for the region has also been prepared with the support of the United Nations Development Programme, the African Development Bank, the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation. The brief is designed to provide potential investors with information on priority investment areas and projects identified through a consultative process in all the signatory countries. A regional ministerial consultation on the brief is scheduled to be held in Luanda in late 2014, with the participation of Governments and private sector stakeholders. Key findings and recommendations will be presented for endorsement by the Regional Oversight Mechanism at its fifth meeting, to be held in Addis Ababa.

33. During my joint visit to the Great Lakes region with the President of the World Bank Group, Jim Yong Kim, in May 2013, the World Bank pledged \$1 billion to support activities in the region that further the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. The World Bank is on track to implement all its commitments within the 24-month timeline set during our visit. Between May 2013 and July 2014, a total of \$538 million was approved by the World Bank for regional programmes in the areas of energy development, combating sexual and gender-based violence, women's health, capacity-building for ICGLR and improvement of information and communications technology connectivity. A key project was approved on 26 June 2014, under which \$106.9 million will support the

Great Lakes Emergency Sexual and Gender-based Violence and Women's Health Project, which covers Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. The project aims to benefit more than 641,000 women and girls, half a million of whom are in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and will also support a regional policy approach endorsed by the Heads of State and Government of countries in the Great Lakes region in the 2011 Kampala declaration on sexual and gender-based violence.

34. In addition, the World Bank and the Office of my Special Envoy have established a facility for technical assistance to ensure that projects to be implemented in the region with the support of the World Bank are conflict-sensitive and in line with the economic and regional integration objectives of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. Meanwhile, other resources have been pledged to the region by various development partners. For instance, at least €3.2 billion has been allocated to Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia under the Eleventh European Development Fund (2014-2020).

IV. Activities of my Special Envoy

35. My Special Envoy has continued to engage regional leaders, bilateral and multilateral partners and civil society organizations to ensure that the broadest possible range of actors remain committed to and supportive of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. During the reporting period, my Special Envoy Mary Robinson and her staff visited several countries in the region, including Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and Rwanda, where they engaged in various activities related to the Framework. In addition, she continued to engage regional and international partners in Addis Ababa, Brussels, London, New York and Washington, D.C.

36. Also during the reporting period, my Special Envoy met with the Chair of ICGLR, lending her support to his good offices to advance high-level political dialogue with fellow Heads of State, to reach consensus on issues of common concern. In that regard, she visited Angola from 7 to 9 May, where she met the Vice-President, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Economy and the Secretary of State for Defence to discuss how to advance the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and maximize opportunities for synergy with Angola. Topics discussed included accelerating the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, tackling FDLR, strengthening the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism and preparing for the Great Lakes private sector investment conference. I was pleased to learn about the commitment of Angola to devote efforts and resources to the fulfilment of the mandate of the Chair of ICGLR.

37. My Special Envoy travelled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 17 and 18 March and again on 2 and 3 June, with the other envoys and representatives. During her meetings with the President and other senior government officials in Kinshasa, she raised the issue of elections, as well as the status of implementation of the country's national commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. She emphasized the need for the timely release of a comprehensive electoral calendar for local, provincial and general elections, and assured the President of international partners' readiness to work with his

Government on all critical issues. She also commended the Government for conducting military operations against ADF and conveyed her condolences for the casualties suffered by the national armed forces.

38. On the issue of elections, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo stated that this was a sovereign matter. He noted that, for purposes of neutrality and impartiality, the conduct of the elections was handled by the Independent National Electoral Commission and that, therefore, all technical questions should be addressed to the Chair of the Commission, Apollinaire Malu Malu.

39. On 7 April, I led a high-level delegation, which included my Special Envoy, to Rwanda to participate in the events marking the twentieth anniversary of the genocide. I stressed that the world should learn from the tragic experience of Rwanda and acknowledged that the United Nations should have done more to prevent the genocide. I commended the impressive transformation of the country and called for continued efforts to protect human rights and promote democracy. In his speech, the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, highlighted some factors behind that successful transformation, notably inter-ethnic reconciliation and accountability for serious crimes.

40. On 6 May, my Special Envoy travelled to Brussels and met with the members of the European Union Political and Security Committee. She discussed some of the priority activities arising from the regional plan of action, in particular the fight against the illegal exploitation of natural resources, regional judicial cooperation, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the return of refugees (especially minorities) and civil society and youth.

41. Within the context of her engagement with youth and children, my Special Envoy participated in the Children's Forum of Hope, held in Bujumbura on 31 May and 1 June. The event enabled children from seven countries of the region to bond, build trust and become "ambassadors of hope" who would champion the objectives of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework in their respective countries. My Special Envoy also participated in the ICGLR summit on youth employment held in Nairobi on 24 July, which brought together youth, experts and government officials from the 13 signatory countries of the Framework. The purpose of the summit was to develop a coordinated approach to youth unemployment and underemployment in the Great Lakes region.

42. My Special Envoy also reached out to the Heads of State and Government of countries in the Great Lakes region in Washington, D.C., from 4 to 6 August, in the margins of the 2014 United States-Africa Leaders Summit. On 7 August, in New York, she addressed the Security Council for the last time as my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region. Later that day, she and the Minister for Africa of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland co-chaired an informal ministerial meeting on the Great Lakes region to promote the rapid disarmament of FDLR and the full implementation of the Nairobi Declarations. My incoming Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Djinnit, attended both meetings.

43. Recognizing that addressing forced displacement is key to promoting peace, security and cooperation in the region, my Special Envoy has made it a priority to support efforts to alleviate the conditions of refugees and internally displaced persons by promoting conditions for durable, voluntary and safe returns in dignity.

From 20 June to 4 July 2014, a joint mission composed of staff from the Office of my Special Envoy, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UNHCR travelled to Uganda, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (North Kivu) and Burundi in order to assess the conditions of refugees, to identify challenges hampering their safe and sustainable return and to devise medium- and long-term strategies. Finding durable solutions for internally displaced persons and refugees is an immense task that will continue to take a significant amount of time, concerted efforts and national, regional and international commitment.

44. The World Bank and UNHCR are conducting an in-depth study on forced displacement in the Great Lakes region; it is expected that a report based on that study will be issued during the last quarter of 2014. The aim is to obtain information on the development needs of displaced persons, opportunities for development interventions in support of displaced persons and recommendations for activities to improve resilience and social cohesion in border communities of the Great Lakes region.

45. In order to maximize synergies and promote a coordinated approach within the United Nations system, the Office of my Special Envoy, together with the United Nations country teams and United Nations representatives, met in Kigali from 28 to 30 May to lay the foundation for a common strategy for the Great Lakes region in support of the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. Further work is under way to formulate an integrated approach to advance the implementation of the Framework.

46. During the reporting period my Special Envoy intensified her engagement with civil society actors during her visits to the region. I was pleased that a coalition of civil society organizations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo issued a report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework on the first anniversary of the agreement. This development suggests that civil society actors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are fully prepared to monitor the implementation of the Framework and to hold their Government accountable. My Special Envoy also engaged with civil society representatives from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, to collect their views on the implementation of the Framework.

47. Following the launch of the Women's Platform for the Framework earlier this year, my Special Envoy and the Office's staff have concluded arrangements to render the Platform operational. The Platform's advisory board held its inaugural conference call on 8 July 2014. The advisory board is a team of experts with experience and expertise in development and women's rights in the Great Lakes region and is mandated to provide guidance on the implementation of the Platform's objectives. I am pleased that Mary Robinson will continue to be involved in the Women's Platform as a key member of the advisory board.

48. The implementation of projects to benefit women in the Great Lakes region has also been at the core of my Special Envoy's activities. As a result of her advocacy efforts with the Governments of the Netherlands and Ireland, over 30 grants will be awarded to projects intended to improve the living conditions and livelihoods of women in rural, conflict-affected areas of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. The grants will focus on: (a) monitoring of and advocacy for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework; (b) implementation of regional and national plans of action under Security Council

resolution 1325 (2000); (c) combating violence against women and assisting women affected by violence; (d) supporting women's livelihoods and development activities; and (e) making clean energy accessible to communities at the local level.

V. Observations and recommendations

49. Over the past six months, there have been notable efforts to stabilize the security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and advance the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. Nonetheless, delays in the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, mistrust between Governments and leaders in the region, disagreements over the voluntary disarmament of FDLR and slow implementation of the regional plan of action represent significant obstacles that must be overcome if sustainable peace and stability is to be brought to the region.

50. One of the most pressing issues remains the lack of expeditious implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, which perpetuates mistrust among Member States. Progress on this front would help build trust and confidence, reduce the risk of a relapse into armed conflict and consolidate the stability of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. Every effort must therefore be made to implement all commitments of the Declarations and to prevent any reversal of the gains achieved. Accordingly, the technical visits by officials of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Uganda and Rwanda in April and July to process eligible M23 members should be followed by concrete steps to achieve their immediate repatriation. I commend the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for its efforts so far. I encourage it to work closely with the Governments of Rwanda and Uganda to establish clear timelines and appropriate follow-up actions to conclude the repatriation of former M23 combatants. Furthermore, the National Oversight Mechanism should accelerate the follow-up processes, with support from ICGLR and the Office of my Special Envoy, to ensure that the Nairobi Declarations are fully implemented.

51. The neutralization of all armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, including FDLR, through non-military and military actions, should also remain a high priority. I welcome the road map agreed by Heads of State in the region at the 14 August mini-summit convened by the President of Angola, in his capacity as ICGLR Chair, and the endorsement of the six-month time frame by SADC Heads of State, in their communiqué of 18 August. FDLR must disarm unconditionally and in a timely manner. In that respect, I look forward to a positive outcome of the joint ICGLR-SADC midterm review in October. Immediate and decisive actions should quickly be taken thereafter to complete the process of neutralizing FDLR, for the sake of peace and stability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.

52. I commend the President of Angola for his efforts to build a regional consensus on the neutralization of FDLR and other armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. I also support his efforts to lead a high-level dialogue on sensitive issues that adversely affect regional cooperation and durable peace. Furthermore, I welcome the unified and strong message on FDLR issued by the Security Council on 26 August. It is my hope that the team of envoys, led by my Special Envoy, will continue to support regional efforts to definitively address the issue of FDLR.

53. I am pleased to note that the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism, despite continuous logistical and political challenges, remains a viable security mechanism for building confidence among the countries in the region, although it needs to be strengthened further. I call upon all Member States in the region to increase collaboration through existing regional mechanisms, such as the Mechanism and the Joint Intelligence Fusion Cell, as well through joint bilateral commissions. My Special Envoy is committed to rallying international support for the Mechanism. I also urge the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda to exercise restraint in border areas and to engage through the Joint Bilateral Commission and the African Union Border Programme to resolve any border-related issues. In that regard, the findings and recommendations of the Mechanism on the recent military skirmish between the two countries warrant serious consideration.

54. The root causes of conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo will not be fully addressed unless the commitments made in Addis Ababa in February 2013 are implemented in full. In this regard, I welcome the positive steps taken by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the other Governments in the region over the past six months, which show that they remain committed to the objectives of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. I also welcome the continuous engagement of the African Union Peace and Security Council, which remains seized of matters related to the Great Lakes region, as demonstrated by its sessions on the implementation of the Framework held in Addis Ababa on 17 June and 22 August. Despite our collective engagement, the overall implementation process remains slow and every effort must be made to energize it. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, implementation is lagging in several critical areas such as security sector reform, decentralization, reconciliation, tolerance and democratization. I urge the Government to accelerate the implementation of its commitments under the Framework and to follow through on the priority recommendations arising from the *concertations nationales* (national dialogue). I call upon the Government to start implementing the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan and to accelerate measures to restore and consolidate State authority throughout eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In that regard, priority should be accorded to the establishment of a rapid reaction force, as provided for in Security Council resolution 2098 (2013). In the same vein, I call upon the other signatories to the Framework to remain fully committed to its objectives and to honour their commitments.

55. In the region, leaders have shown their resolve to work together for peace and security in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. I commend the countries of the northern corridor of East Africa for their resolve in accelerating regional integration. It is my hope that similar progress will be made in the context of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries, whose leaders have not met at the summit level in over 20 years, despite significant interaction at the ministerial and technical levels. Reviving the Community would no doubt boost conflict prevention and confidence-building efforts in the Great Lakes region, notably through enhanced economic cooperation and social transformation in the countries involved.

56. The Technical Support Committee of the Regional Oversight Mechanism has been serving as a forum for dialogue and confidence-building in the region, under the leadership of my Special Envoy and the African Union Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region. More concrete actions are needed, however, to expedite

the implementation of the regional plan of action and achieve all the commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. To this end, I welcome the report on progress made with regard to the Framework that was jointly presented by my Special Envoy and the African Union Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region at the fourth meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, held in New York on 22 September. I urge the countries in the region to carefully consider the recommendations made in the report and to take the steps necessary to accelerate the implementation process. I also count on members of the Technical Support Committee to play a more active role in the implementation of the Framework in their respective countries, with support from the Office of my Special Envoy.

57. Coordinated and coherent support by international partners remains critical to ensure that progress is made in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. In that regard, the development partners conference, which is scheduled to be held towards the end of 2014 in Brussels, is a positive step towards achieving the promises of the economic pillar envisaged in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. I welcome the commitments made by various development partners, including the World Bank, the European Union and other bilateral partners to the Great Lakes region, and I commend their continuing commitment to the region. I encourage multilateral and bilateral partners to strengthen their collaboration with regional organizations and the Governments in the region to promote sustainable development. To that end, I am encouraged by the significant progress that the Office of my Special Envoy, together with ICGLR and the Government of Angola, has made towards organizing a Great Lakes private sector investment conference, including through the development of an investment opportunity brief that identifies catalytic cross-border development projects. I appeal to all key partners, including private investors, to participate in this conference with a view to supporting projects that will bring development and stability to the region.

58. The issue of the return of refugees and internally displaced persons remains a major humanitarian concern. No effort should be spared in finding durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons in the Great Lakes region. My Special Envoy will continue to work with mandated agencies to encourage coordinated action at the national, regional and international levels to promote an environment conducive to sustainable returns. I encourage key actors to support the Governments in the region to ensure that State authority, the rule of law, basic services, property and land rights, and economic opportunities are in place when people do begin to return. I call on donors to help ensure that agencies such as WFP, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UNHCR have the funds necessary to assist persons in need.

59. I remain concerned about recurrent reports of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, by armed groups and the national armed forces in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. I commend the Government for its efforts to investigate these crimes and prosecute those responsible, and encourage all Governments in the region to create effective mechanisms to address them and hold perpetrators, including government officials, accountable. I also urge the Governments in the region to develop a strategy to foster regional judicial cooperation, in line with their commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

60. I am pleased to note that from 20 August to 14 September, during his introductory tour of the region, my new Special Envoy received unequivocal assurances of support from Governments and leaders in the region. Building on the work of his predecessor, he will continue to work closely with the ICGLR Chair and other leaders in the region, as well as international partners, to ensure a coordinated approach to the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. He will also continue to work in close cooperation with the African Union, ICGLR, SADC and the team of envoys to ensure that regional and international efforts complement and reinforce each other. Through his Office, my Special Envoy will continue to develop specific initiatives to advance regional social and economic cooperation, encourage the full participation of women, youth and civil society in all aspects of the Framework, and develop synergies with partners.

61. Finally, I wish to thank my outgoing Special Envoy, Mary Robinson, for her contribution to peace in the Great Lakes region. I also thank my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO, Martin Kobler, as well as the staff of special political missions and peacekeeping missions in the region. I call on the Security Council and other international partners to provide my current Special Envoy, Said Djinnit, with all the support necessary to revitalize and ensure the effective implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

**Security Council**

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**Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations
Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic
Republic of the Congo****I. Introduction**

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 39 of Security Council resolution 2147 (2014). It covers major developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since my report of 30 June 2014 (S/2014/450), including with regard to the implementation of national commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region and progress made by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in implementing its mandate. It also provides an update on the reconfiguration of MONUSCO and the transfer of tasks to the United Nations country team.

II. Major developments**Political developments**

2. The formation of a new Government of "national cohesion" announced by President Joseph Kabila in October 2013 did not take place during the reporting period. The extraordinary session of Parliament, which was expected to focus on the adoption of three laws on the organization of local, provincial and general elections and one law modifying article 70 of the Constitution in order to change the voting system for provincial elections, also was not held. This fuelled speculation about further revisions of the Constitution in the future, aimed at circumventing presidential term limits.

3. The Independence Day (30 June) commemorations were dominated by President Kabila's speech, in which he paid tribute to the patriotism and valour of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo — FARDC) in their victory over the rebels of the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23). Independence Day was preceded by statements from several opposition parties and coalitions, in which they rejected the electoral calendar published in May and opposed any constitutional amendments or changes to presidential term limits. Several opposition parties called for the restructuring of the Commission électorale nationale indépendante and the prosecution of its



President. They also threatened to withdraw their representatives from the Commission.

4. The debate over constitutional changes continued to widen. Three weeks after the Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a statement reiterating its opposition to any revision of the Constitution, the Archdiocese of Kinshasa organized a conference in mid-July on the theme "Is now the appropriate time to amend the Constitution?". Among the featured speakers was one of President Kabila's advisers, who argued that the 2005 Constitution was not adapted to the post-transitional context and that a new Constitution was needed as the country transformed into an emerging regional power.

5. In July and August, the Secretary-General of the presidential majority, Aubin Minaku, and the President of the Parti du peuple pour la reconstruction et la démocratie, Evariste Boshab, among other influential political leaders, echoed views about the need to extensively revise the Constitution in order to adapt it to evolving realities. Some called for such amendments to be adopted by referendum and began campaigning for public support.

6. However, disagreements appeared to surface within the presidential majority, with the Mouvement social pour le renouveau publicly expressing concern about any modification of article 220 of the Constitution, which prohibits the revision of provisions relating to presidential term limits and other fundamental principles.

7. On 4 August, some of the main parliamentary opposition parties, including the Union pour la nation congolaise and the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social, organized a rally in Kinshasa in opposition to any constitutional change that would end presidential term limits. National deputy and Union pour la nation congolaise General Secretary Jean-Bertrand Ewanga was arrested on 5 August on charges of slandering the Head of State and inciting ethnic hatred in relation to his statements at the rally, raising concern about respect for fundamental freedoms and political space for the opposition. On 11 September, the Supreme Court sentenced Mr. Ewanga to one year in prison for contempt of the President, the Parliament and members of the Government.

8. On 3 September, approximately 30 civil society organizations issued a statement for consideration by the Parliament, in which they opposed any amendment to the Constitution that would compromise progress in consolidating democracy and the rule of law.

9. On 15 September, in Kinshasa, the Parliament reconvened in an ordinary session, which was boycotted by members of Parliament from the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social and the Union pour la nation congolaise in protest against the imprisonment of Mr. Ewanga. At the opening ceremony, National Assembly Speaker Aubin Minaku stated that the Assembly would have to take a decision on changing the voting system from direct to indirect suffrage for provincial elections, which implies a constitutional modification. He indicated that the modification of other articles, including article 220, should be decided by referendum. Senate President Kengo Wa Dondo declared his opposition to any attempt to change article 220, which limits presidential terms, and called upon national stakeholders not to support any such amendment, since it could jeopardize national cohesion and peace.

Progress on the implementation of national commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region: National Oversight Mechanism and benchmarking process

10. On 12 July, a matrix of 56 benchmarks and 347 indicators for the six national commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework was endorsed at a high-level validation seminar organized by the National Oversight Mechanism and the Ministry of Planning, with the support of MONUSCO, the United Nations country team and other international partners. Emphasizing national ownership of the benchmarking process, the seminar paved the way for the inclusion of the national commitments in the budget planning for 2015. On 17 September, the Steering Committee of the National Oversight Mechanism, chaired by President Kabila, adopted the matrix.

Security sector reform

11. There was no progress on the adoption by the Government of a national security sector reform strategy. Only very limited progress was achieved on the establishment of a rapid reaction force within FARDC. A dedicated FARDC reform focal point was designated to act as the Mission's army and defence reform interlocutor. The need to establish a rapid reaction force by the end of March 2015 was also included in the national benchmarks for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, but priority actions for implementing this benchmark were still under discussion. The use of the tactical training centre (Centre d'entraînement tactique des bataillons) for training the rapid reaction force in Kisangani was called into question following the Government's decision that the facility be used in the short-to-medium term for the Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda (FDLR) disarmament process.

12. Police reform continued to be hampered by a \$173 million shortfall in the 2014 national budget. Advocacy efforts focused on ensuring that a sufficient allocation be included in the 2015 budget. Budget constraints have had a negative impact on plans to remove officers that are unfit for service from the Congolese National Police ranks, conduct capacity-building activities and build a police academy and police stations.

Consolidation of State authority

13. Through quick-impact projects, the road linking Walikale, Itebero and Otobora is being rehabilitated. Under the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy, other road rehabilitation projects are ongoing, including on the following axes: Sake-Walikale-Hombo, Bunyakiri-Hombo-Musenge, Baraka-Fizi-Minembwe and Burhale-Shabunda. These projects enable the State to establish its presence in remote rural areas through the redeployment of local administrative authorities and increased mobility of national security forces and MONUSCO, for a quicker response to community protection alerts.

14. Restoration of State authority was supported through islands of stability in the territories of Masisi, Rutshuru and Walikale in North Kivu and Shabunda territory in South Kivu. This encompassed capacity-building for over 700 local authorities and civil society members. Activities focused on national guidelines for territorial administration, conflict management and democratic governance, resulting in an improved understanding of the decentralization process and the establishment of local conciliation committees to increase dialogue among communities.

Decentralization

15. Only modest progress was achieved in implementing the reforms defined under the Constitution, especially in respect of fiscal decentralization and the adoption of legal frameworks to subdivide provinces and establish decentralized governing structures. A number of important implementing laws and measures, such as those regarding the definition of boundaries for future provinces, the establishment of a mechanism to redistribute revenues among provinces and the reorganization of public administration, remained pending.

Structural reforms of government institutions, including financial reforms

16. Progress in structural reforms was mixed. On 2 July, the International Board of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative designated the Democratic Republic of the Congo as "Board-compliant". The country's status had been temporarily suspended in April 2013.

17. In July, the Central Bank of the Congo began a consultative process on the possible creation of a stock exchange. The Bank also implemented reforms aimed at ending the use of the United States dollar as legal tender in the Congolese economy. In contrast, structural reforms to further the independence of the Central Bank of the Congo, including through its recapitalization, and to improve the transparency and governance of State-owned enterprises in the mining sector remained stalled.

Reconciliation, tolerance and democratization

18. On 7 July, the nine members of the new Constitutional Court were appointed by presidential decree. The Court has, *inter alia*, jurisdiction over the interpretation of the Constitution and replaces the Supreme Court as the final jurisdiction for adjudicating electoral disputes in respect of legislative and presidential elections.

19. On 9 July, the Government announced an additional 246 beneficiaries of the Amnesty Law of 11 February. While 153 were from the Mayi-Mayi Kata-Katanga, no former M23 elements were listed. The six-month period to request amnesty expired on 15 August. Nonetheless, the Government undertook to grant amnesty to eligible applicants, including former M23 elements, regardless of the expiration of the grace period. Thus, on 3 September, the Government announced an additional 272 beneficiaries of the Amnesty Law, including 191 former M23 combatants, 162 of whom are in Uganda awaiting repatriation.

Electoral developments

20. Preparations for local elections proceeded, albeit at a slow pace. Following a pilot exercise in Bandundu, the process of updating the voters' register and mapping polling stations was launched in the remaining 10 provinces and is expected to conclude at the end of November.

21. At the 18 July and 27 August meetings of the Partnership Committee and the Elections Technical Committee respectively, the Commission électorale nationale indépendante, MONUSCO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and donors continued to discuss the UNDP electoral support project. Partners clearly linked their financial commitment to the publication of the 2014-2016 global electoral calendar. Delays in finalizing a multi-year electoral budget and the lack of a clear disbursement plan for funds already allocated delayed the procurement

process, resulting in a projected two-month slippage in the partial operational calendar, which currently envisages local elections taking place between June and October 2015. The first set of local elections is now foreseen for mid-August 2015.

22. On 24 July, the Commission électorale nationale indépendante successfully organized legislative by-elections in Befale, Equateur Province, a seat unoccupied since the Supreme Court's cancellation of by-elections in 2011. Provisional results were published on 25 July, with definitive results expected in October.

23. On 21 August, the Commission fired 96 staff members who were reportedly involved in acts of theft and illegal sale of Commission material, embezzlement of funds, falsifying voter registration cards and abandoning their posts.

Situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo

24. The security situation in North Kivu continued to be dominated by the FDLR voluntary disarmament process and the pursuit of military operations against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), Nduma Defence of Congo/Cheka (NDC/Cheka) and other armed groups.

25. Although ongoing military operations significantly weakened ADF, the rebel group retained the capacity to launch sporadic ambushes against FARDC. The main thrust of the military operations against ADF in Beni territory, which resumed on 15 July, were aimed at disrupting the group's supply routes. As a result of the pressure from FARDC, ADF split into small groups, with some reportedly moving towards Virunga National Park, regarded as an ADF sanctuary. According to the Administrator of Beni territory, by early August, approximately 280 out of the 600 hostages believed to be held by ADF had been released and returned to their villages.

26. In Walikale territory, FARDC-led operations to neutralize NDC/Cheka — launched on 2 July with the support of MONUSCO — resulted in the recapture of the main Kashebere-Mpofi-Walikale Centre axis, including the group's former strongholds in Buniyampuli and on the Kibua-Pinga axis. The operations continued on the northern side of the Osso River. As a result of the operations, 23 NDC/Cheka elements surrendered to MONUSCO in August.

27. In southern Walikale territory, at least 13 schools were forced to close in July, owing to clashes between rival factions of Mayi-Mayi Raia Mutomboki. In mid-August, FARDC launched operations against Mayi-Mayi Raia Mutomboki and Mayi-Mayi Kifuafua elements on the Itibero-Hombo axis, regaining control of the axis by 22 August. In late August, in Rutshuru territory, FARDC commenced joint operations with rangers of the Institut congolais pour la conservation de la nature to dislodge FDLR-Forces combattantes Abacunguzi, FDLR-Rally for Unity and Democracy and Mayi-Mayi Shetani from the area west and north-west of Nyalima.

28. On 13 August, in Remeka, South Masisi, 17 alleged former M23 elements led by former Rwanda Defence Force Captain Gapasi were arrested by a Mayi-Mayi Raia Mutomboki faction led by "Colonel" Maachano and a Mayi-Mayi Kifuafua splinter group. FARDC presented this arrest as a step towards dismantling M27, a group that would have been reconstituted on the remnants of M23, with a similar seditious agenda. Some elements belonging to this group seemingly came from Ngoma camp in Rwanda. They were part of the M23 faction led by Bosco Ntaganda and could have returned clandestinely to Masisi in order to secure economic interests.

29. The security situation in the Ruzizi Plains of South Kivu remained volatile. Following the killing on 6 June of at least 34 civilians in the village of Mutarule, a significant rise in inter-ethnic incidents was reported, including cattle rustling, abductions and killings. In addition to launching an internal investigation into the 6 June killings, MONUSCO increased patrols and supported the deployment of joint investigation teams with Congolese military justice officials. Two persons were arrested in relation to the killings, including the Commander of the FARDC 1052nd battalion. Following the killing of another six civilians on 13 August in Mutarule, MONUSCO launched internal investigations and supported the deployment of two joint investigation teams with the FARDC Military Prosecutor. Another three individuals were killed on 23 August in what appeared to be ethnically targeted killings in Itombwe, Mwenga territory. In a bid to stem rising tensions, MONUSCO identified the locality of Sange as a location for establishing an island of stability.

30. The security situation in southern Uvira and Fizi territories continued to be marked by renewed military activities by Mayi-Mayi Yakutumba, with clashes with FARDC reported in the Ubwari Peninsula, Baraka, Misisi, Mizimu, Yungu and Talama villages and a significant increase in piracy on Lake Tanganyika.

31. The security situation in Katanga province remained fragile. Attacks and exactions by Mayi-Mayi Kata-Katanga in Mitwaba territory resulted in the displacement of an estimated 50,978 persons. From 15 to 18 July, MONUSCO fielded a mission to Mitwaba to ascertain the veracity of the reported intention of the group's leader, Gédéon Kyunguto, to surrender. MONUSCO started deploying a temporary operating base in Mitwaba to facilitate his surrender as well as the creation of an island of stability in the locality. Contrary to his intention to surrender, Gédéon Kyunguto set up headquarters in the caves of Kibawa in western Moba territory, from which he started recruiting and training local youth. On 17 August, the headquarters was overrun by FARDC.

32. In other developments in Katanga Province, intercommunity conflict between the Balubakat and the Pygmies in Manono territory spilled over into Kalemie, Kabalo and Nyunzu territories, resulting in the displacement of some 80,000 persons fleeing atrocities reportedly committed by both sides. MONUSCO responded by deploying a number of fact-finding missions in Kabalo territory, which gathered information on allegations of gross human rights violations, mainly perpetrated by the Balubakat militia against the Pygmy. MONUSCO subsequently deployed a special investigation team to ascertain these reports and launched an island of stability project in Manono territory to deal with the situation.

33. In Orientale Province, in Mambasa territory, Mayi-Mayi Simba carried out several attacks on gold mining sites and civilians, reportedly to avenge the death of their leader, Morgan, who was killed during his surrender to FARDC on 14 April, as well as for financial gain. These included an attack on 5 July in Bakaiko, during which 17 women were raped and 16 civilians were killed. Similarly, in the night of 6 to 7 July, another faction of this group attacked Alota village, killing four civilians and abducting an indeterminate number of people. Mambasa was identified as a location for the establishment in September of an island of stability.

34. The security situation in Ituri district, especially in South Irumu, remained volatile and unpredictable despite ongoing FARDC operations against the Forces de résistance patriotiques en Ituri (FRPI). Between 20 and 26 July, FRPI perpetrated attacks and exactions against Sorodo, Kagoro, Songozo, Kamatsi, Mukubwa and

Bunga villages. In Sorodo, FRPI militia allegedly assaulted and wounded eight civilians, including a pregnant woman, and looted household items. Negotiations between FARDC and the FRPI leader, Cobra Matata, for the group's surrender continued but failed to produce the desired outcome.

35. The security situation in Bas- and Haut-Uélé remained relatively calm, with reported breaches of public order and criminal activity by small groups of bandits or suspected Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) elements. Most incidents were concentrated in the Duru-Doruma-Dungu Triangle in Niangara territory and along the borders with the Central African Republic and South Sudan. During the reporting period, 81 LRA dependants were released in Bas- and Haut-Uélé between 26 August and 4 September. To counter the LRA and other activities carried out by unidentified armed elements, MONUSCO established a mobile operational base in Kiliwa from 8 to 10 September and conducted night and day patrols as well as aerial reconnaissance.

Humanitarian situation

36. The estimated number of internally displaced persons remained at 2.6 million. However, significant new displacements occurred in Southern Irumu owing to attacks by FRPI and in Katanga's Tanganyika District owing to fighting between Pygmy and Balubakat groups.

37. On 19 August, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees restarted voluntary return operations for former Angolan refugees by train from Kinshasa and Bas-Congo. Out of 47,851 refugees, 29,659 have expressed the wish to return to Angola, with the other 18,192 opting for reintegration into the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

38. On 24 August, the Ministry of Health confirmed the outbreak of Ebola in Boende District, Equateur Province. By 9 September, 64 cases had been reported, including 35 deaths owing to a strain homologous to the Zaire Kikwit strain. This outbreak is unrelated to the West African Ebola outbreak. A quarantine affecting 40,000 people has been established in the 100-km area surrounding Djera, the Ebola epicentre. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations humanitarian country team are cooperating on an \$8.6 million emergency response.

39. Meanwhile, the humanitarian appeal for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, set at \$832 million, remains only 36 per cent funded.

Economic developments

40. The International Monetary Fund projected a growth of 8.5 per cent in the gross domestic product of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2015; this is down slightly from 2014, mainly owing to fluctuations in the international prices of the country's main mineral exports. Notwithstanding recent strong economic growth, poverty remained widespread and posed a risk to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Reviewing economic and social indicators, the UNDP *Human Development Report 2014: Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resistance*, published on 24 July, ranked the Democratic Republic of the Congo 186th out of the 187 countries assessed.

Regional developments

41. On 2 July, in Luanda, at a joint ministerial meeting of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), participants agreed to extend the 22-day FDLR disarmament plan of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo by an additional six months, with a midterm review on 2 October. Under the leadership of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, on 16 July, the Government established a two-tiered coordination mechanism with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, SADC and MONUSCO to agree on political and strategic decisions for the technical process. At the monthly ambassadorial plenary meetings on 2 August and 2 September and at ad hoc working-level meetings, the discussion focused on developing criteria to evaluate progress and defining steps for moving the process forward.

42. On 6 August, a joint delegation of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, MONUSCO and SADC travelled to Lusumambo to deliver a strong message to the FDLR leadership, including that all FDLR elements should leave the Democratic Republic of the Congo within the six-month time frame via voluntary repatriation to Rwanda or relocation to third countries; that 70 per cent of the estimated 1,400 combatants should disarm by 2 October; that units should disarm, with their leadership; and that all human rights violations and illicit economic activities should cease immediately. The delegation also asked the FDLR leadership to order the immediate transfer of disarmed elements and dependants from temporary camps in the Kivus to Kisangani, in Orientale Province. On 7 August, as part of his statement to the Security Council, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Raymond Tshibanda, warned FDLR that it should surrender in greater numbers and either disarm voluntarily or face FARDC and the Force Intervention Brigade. In open letters signed by the armed group's interim president, Victor Byiringiro, to the Security Council on 4 August, to the United States Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 8 August and to the incoming SADC Chair, President Mugabe of Zimbabwe, on 27 August, FDLR made clear its position that it would not, under any circumstances, move from the Kivus to a transit camp in Kisangani or engage in a disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration process, unless as an outcome of dialogue with the Government of Rwanda.

43. On 14 August, the President of Angola, José Eduardo Dos Santos, hosted a mini-summit of regional Heads of State to discuss common security issues, including the FDLR disarmament process and the repatriation of former M23 combatants. The Presidents of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa and Uganda were present, with ministerial participation from the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania. The communiqué of the mini-summit reinforced the ultimatum to disarm within six months of 2 July and stated that military action would be planned if there was no progress on clear benchmarks at the 2 October midterm evaluation.

44. An SADC summit held in Zimbabwe on 17 and 18 August endorsed the 2 July decision of the Joint Ministerial Meeting of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and SADC, according to which voluntary disarmament by FDLR should be completed within six months. The summit also called upon the

United Nations, in cooperation with the African Union, to play its role in repatriating FDLR elements who have voluntarily surrendered and disarmed or provide them with temporary resettlement in third countries outside the Great Lakes Region.

45. At the 2 September plenary of the FDLR coordination mechanism, Minister Tshibanda underlined his Government's determination that all FDLR leave the country within the six-month time frame. He noted an emerging consensus among stakeholders that FDLR had not sincerely engaged in an unconditional disarmament process and that that process had stalled.

46. Other initiatives to strengthen regional cooperation and build confidence were also undertaken. For the first time in seven years, the Democratic Republic of the Congo-Uganda Joint Cooperation Commission held bilateral exchanges, from 24 to 27 August in Kinshasa, aimed at reviewing progress on confidence-building measures and cooperation in the areas of defence, security, the judiciary, education and culture. A number of issues of common interest, including the repatriation of former M23 combatants and the situation of refugees, were also discussed.

47. In line with the recommendation of the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism following its investigation into border skirmishes between security forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda near Kibumba, North Kivu in June, the Democratic Republic of the Congo Joint Border Commission reconvened in Goma from 4 to 7 August. Meeting after a long hiatus owing to the M23 conflict, participants agreed to undertake a mission to clarify contentious land border areas, which took place from 25 to 30 August and identified the location of 22 border markers.

III. Implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Good offices of my Special Representative

48. Following the objections voiced by President Kabila in May regarding third-party-led round tables on electoral matters, my Special Representative and MONUSCO consulted all stakeholders, including the Commission électorale nationale indépendante and the main majority and opposition parties, to devise a new formula to fulfil the Special Representative's mandated role of good offices. All parties expressed support for continuing a dialogue on electoral issues, with the support of the good offices of MONUSCO.

49. The senior leadership of MONUSCO, including the two Deputy Special Representatives, also met extensively with relevant Government Ministers and senior officials and facilitated meetings with the international community on key issues, including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration planning, security sector reform, the repatriation of former M23 elements and the voluntary disarmament of FDLR. My Deputy Special Representative for Rule of Law and Operations East supported the Minister of Defence in finalizing the third national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan, which was launched on 11 July, and worked closely with Government counterparts on advancing the repatriation process for former M23 elements, namely preparing the joint technical mission of

the Government, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, MONUSCO and the Office of the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region to Rwanda from 17 to 21 July. The mission identified 453 of the 767 former M23 elements cantoned at the Ngoma and Gisovu regrouping sites as potential beneficiaries of the Amnesty Law of 11 February. The remaining 314 former M23 elements could not be accounted for since they were not present at the sites during the mission.

Protection of civilians

50. In July, MONUSCO improved its early warning and response mechanisms at all Mission levels. The effectiveness of these mechanisms was demonstrated on 9 July in Mambasa territory, Orientale Province. Alerts triggered an immediate military response from the Mission, which deployed 70 troops to the area to protect civilians against increasingly threatening activities by FRPI.

51. Within the framework of its strategy to fight insecurity and protect the civilian population in Beni, the United Nations police opened two free hotlines through which the population could contact the Congolese National Police. As at 2 September, 240 calls had been received, prompting 125 follow-up actions by the Congolese National Police and leading to 93 arrests.

52. Over 90 community protection committees in five provinces continued to manage local protection plans aimed at improving preventive responses by MONUSCO and Congolese authorities. In July, the Mission initiated support to the establishment of community protection plans in 36 existing company operating bases/temporary operating bases.

53. Completed in July 2014, a best practices review of community alert networks assessed that such networks were effective protection tools. The review recommended their use in other peacekeeping operations.

54. As part of the implementation of local protection plans, over 469 early warning alerts were transmitted between 1 July and 1 September. The MONUSCO Force responded directly in 13 per cent of cases; 43 per cent of the alerts were conveyed to Congolese security forces and 36 per cent to local civilian authorities. In approximately 46 per cent of all alerts received, violations against civilians were either halted or the perpetrators arrested, or the potential threats were deterred.

Mission deployment and neutralizing armed groups

55. The MONUSCO Force continued to support the FDLR voluntary disarmament process by securing former combatants who had surrendered and their dependants. Meanwhile, the monitoring of FDLR activities continues and joint plans with FARDC for military action are being prepared, should the process fail.

56. MONUSCO supported FARDC operations against ADF, NDC/Cheka and the Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (APCLS) in North Kivu, through joint planning, situational awareness, logistics and fire support.

57. At the request of the Congolese authorities, MONUSCO facilitated the safe evacuation from several locations within the area of operations, to Beni and then Goma, of an estimated 50 ADF dependants. MONUSCO also provided logistical support to encourage ADF and NDC/Cheka elements to surrender through leaflet drops and radio broadcasts.

Support to defence sector reform and police reform

58. On 27 June, the plenary of the National Committee for Police Reform adopted a policy document on human resources management and, on 15 August, a draft decree regulating the conditions and modalities of engagement of the mobile intervention units of the Congolese National Police. MONUSCO contributed to the development of both documents.

59. MONUSCO and the European Union Mission of Assistance for Security Sector Reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo also continued to chair regular meetings of key FARDC reform partners, with a view to harmonizing the contributions of international partners to army and defence reform and to help to advance the rapid reaction force concept.

60. MONUSCO trained a total of 915 officers of the Congolese National Police, including 64 women, on such topics as crowd control, traffic police and coaching. A total of 187 officers were trained in community policing in Bukavu, South Kivu, with the support of the Department for International Development of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, while 245 officers were trained on the same issue in Kisangani and Bunia, with support from UNDP. A total of 302 officers completed their training in policing of mining sites, community policing and addressing sexual and gender-based violence at a facility in Mugunga built under the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy in support of the Government's stabilization and reconstruction plan for areas emerging from armed conflict.

Justice and corrections institutions

61. Through its prosecution support cells, MONUSCO continued to provide technical and logistical support to military justice authorities to investigate and prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious crimes.

62. In July and August, MONUSCO supported the military courts of Katanga Province and Orientale Province in conducting mobile court proceedings in Pweto, Komanda and Dungu relating to the prosecution of members of FARDC and armed groups charged with rape and other serious crimes. MONUSCO also supported the organization of mobile court proceedings in South Kivu for the trial of Lieutenant Colonel Engagela, alias "Colonel 106", charged with crimes against humanity, including rape and murder, allegedly committed between 2000 and 2006.

63. During the reporting period, within the framework of the joint justice support programme, MONUSCO and UNDP finalized the programme component for support to the Constitutional Court and other higher jurisdictions and began developing a resource mobilization strategy. The Mission also supported the Ministry of Justice in assessing the 2007-2012 national justice reform strategy and continued to engage with the Government on the preparation of a new strategy.

64. During the reporting period, two corrections staff members were seconded to UNDP to support prison reform projects under the joint justice support programme. In July, MONUSCO organized five workshops on security and prison management in Bukavu, Butembo and Goma. In August, it started implementing a quick-impact project to construct separate facilities for women prisoners in the prison in Uvira, South Kivu. Four prison rehabilitation programmes were also handed over to local authorities in Goma. In the absence of major stakeholders that provide corrections-

related support in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO continued to provide critical advisory and technical support, including capacity-building through co-location with the Government, on prison management, health care and security. However, there continued to be a lack of national ownership and accountability on prison matters, leading to deplorable prison conditions and insecurity.

Stabilization and peace consolidation

65. From 15 to 17 July, in cooperation with the stabilization and reconstruction plan for areas emerging from armed conflict, MONUSCO organized a workshop to identify priority zones for programming within the framework of the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy. Work under the plan is carried out, in collaboration with partners, to conduct assessments that inform the development of provincial stabilization plans and provincial action plans.

66. On 1 September, two initial pilot projects for stabilization in Kalehe, South Kivu, and in Mambasa, Orientale Province, were submitted for approval to the Peacebuilding Fund. These projects are aligned with the islands of stability and International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy priority zones.

Extraction and trade of natural resources

67. By 1 July 2014, all MONUSCO activities related to the implementation of the project on mineral trading centres were transferred to the International Organization for Migration (IOM). However, MONUSCO continued to monitor the security situation in the mining sites and to share expertise with IOM for the establishment of a conflict-free minerals supply chain.

Support to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and to disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration

68. During the reporting period, 121 Congolese armed group members (48 combatants and 73 children associated with armed groups) and 61 foreign armed group elements participated in the MONUSCO disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. Thirty-six of those 61 were combatants, including 35 from FDLR, while 7 were children associated with armed groups and 18 were dependants. Furthermore, 65 FDLR elements, including 4 children associated with armed groups and 24 dependants, were repatriated.

69. On 11 July, the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Defence officially shared the finalized National Programme for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration III document, including an operational plan, with donors for resource mobilization and announced the Government's contribution of \$10 million to the \$85 million four-year plan. MONUSCO will contribute \$8 million.

70. Providing logistical and political support to the FDLR disarmament process continued to be the Mission's top priority. As at 25 August, MONUSCO had provided 53 special flights for regional and international partners, including the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, SADC and States Members of the United Nations, 16.2 tons of food, 213,000 litres of water, 130 tents and 1,300 mattresses, as well as additional goods and services to 621 persons (186 combatants and 435 dependants) housed in Kanyabayonga and Walungu regrouping sites in North and South Kivu, respectively. The refusal by the FDLR

leadership to order the move from these temporary regrouping sites, which have reached their full capacity, to Kisangani contributed to, among other things, preventing further surrenders.

Electoral support

71. At the request of the Commission électorale nationale indépendante, MONUSCO provided logistical support to transport personnel and over 70 tons of electoral equipment during the ongoing update of the voters' register and the mapping of polling stations. This effort was extended to assist with the organization of the legislative by-elections in Befale territory, in Equateur Province.

Human rights

72. Serious human rights violations continued to be committed by armed groups and State agents. Investigations carried out by the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in June and July indicated that at least 34 Bafuliiru had been killed, including 16 women and 8 children, and at least 24 people had been wounded. In addition, 10 houses and 1 church were burned down in an attack on 6 June by Banyamulenge and Barundi militias on Mutarule village, Uvira territory, in South Kivu. Some of the victims were allegedly burned alive and others were shot or hacked with machetes.

73. In the pre-electoral context, MONUSCO continued to document human rights violations against members of the political opposition or others critical of the policies and actions of the Congolese authorities, journalists, human rights defenders and, in some cases, their family members.

74. In Kasai Orientale, the conviction of a member of the opposition party Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social for libel was upheld on appeal on 21 July during a mobile court hearing of the Tribunal de Grande Instance of Mbuji-Mayi. He was sentenced to 12 months in prison and fined 5 million Congolese francs. On the night of 2 to 3 August, 11 civilians, including 1 activist from the human rights non-governmental organization La Voix des Sans Voix pour les droits de l'homme, were reportedly detained in Kinshasa by a group of FARDC and Congolese National Police elements during search operations for an alleged suspect in the 22 July shootings at the Tshatshi military camp. The activist was reportedly released on 12 August. On 15 August, the General Secretary of the Parti de la révolution du peuple was reported to have been beaten up and abducted by a group of unidentified armed men presumed to be agents of the Agence nationale de renseignements. MONUSCO confirmed that she received medical treatment at the hospital operated by the intelligence services. Mike Mukebayi, the editor of the paper *CongoNews*, has been detained since 21 August, reportedly for libelling Cardinal Monsengwo, the Archbishop of Kinshasa, in an article published in the paper.

Sexual violence

75. Armed groups and national security forces continued to commit crimes of sexual violence. Of the 37 cases recorded throughout the country, 15 were committed by FARDC and 10 by Mayi-Mayi combatants from different groups, 18 of which occurred in North Kivu, South Kivu and Orientale Provinces.

76. On 9 July, in line with his commitments following the national consultations in October 2013 and the April 2014 Parliamentary Forum of the International

Conference on the Great Lakes Region, President Kabila appointed Jeannine Mabunda Lioko Mudiayi as his Special Adviser on Sexual Violence and Child Recruitment.

77. MONUSCO, with United Nations and other development partners, continued to support national stakeholders, including the Ministry of Gender and civil society, on issues relating to sexual violence. This included a review of the national Comprehensive Strategy for Combating Gender Violence adopted by the Government in 2009.

78. My Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, completed a five-day visit to Kinshasa on 1 September. With the support of her office and the United Nations, a draft FARDC action plan on sexual violence was presented to the press by the Minister of Defence on 30 August after a two-day workshop organized by the Government.

Child protection and armed conflict

79. As at 12 September, MONUSCO had documented 128 cases of children (4 girls and 124 boys) who had escaped or were separated from armed groups. Of these, five were Ugandan and one was Rwandan. MONUSCO is in the process of documenting the cases of 25 Congolese girls who were reported to have escaped from LRA. In addition, the Mission continues to receive information from reliable sources indicating the recruitment and use of children by armed groups, including Mayi-Mayi Nyatura and FDLR-Forces combattantes Abacunguzi in Rutshuru territory, ADF in Beni territory, NDC/Cheka in Walikale territory, Mayi-Mayi Mulumba in Fizi territory, Mayi-Mayi Nakishale in Uvira territory and Raia Mutomboki in Masisi territory.

80. Furthermore, 30 children formerly associated with armed groups, who had been detained by FARDC and the Agence nationale de renseignements, were released. On 15 August, FARDC and MONUSCO jointly launched Opération Sauvetage in Beni territory to rescue children formerly associated with ADF as dependants, hostages or combatants hiding in Virunga National Park. As at 12 September, 41 children had been rescued and are receiving appropriate care and assistance.

81. Pursuant to the action plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children and sexual violence by Government armed forces signed in October 2012, a United Nations-Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo provincial joint technical working group was established in Goma on 29 August. The working group will facilitate the implementation of the action plan in North Kivu.

Monitoring the implementation of the arms embargo

82. There were no major events related to the arms embargo during the reporting period. However, relevant information continued to be systematically shared with the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and exploited internally by MONUSCO.

Support for the disposal of explosive ordnance

83. During the reporting period, the United Nations Mine Action Service trained 90 personnel from MONUSCO, United Nations agencies and national security

forces on awareness on improvised explosive devices. Despite a significant reduction in resources, the Service destroyed 24 tons of expired ordnance stocks and 6,948 items of unexploded ordnance. This work significantly improved the safety of military contingents and increased the freedom of movement of the local population and humanitarian agencies in the Kivus and Katanga. The Service continued to carry out humanitarian clearance and advocacy activities to support national mine action authorities.

IV. Safety and security of United Nations personnel within the context of the operations of the Force Intervention Brigade

84. To date, the support by MONUSCO to FARDC-led operations against armed groups has not resulted in any discernible increase in threats to the United Nations personnel in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Nevertheless, security risk management measures remain in place.

V. Road map for the transfer of tasks and mission reconfiguration

85. The handover of substantive responsibilities to the United Nations country team was completed on 1 July. Consequently, MONUSCO no longer performs the following responsibilities in the non-conflict-affected areas, as described in my report of December 2013 (S/2013/757): human rights training, children affected by armed conflict, sexual violence, mine action, justice and corrections, extraction and trade of natural resources (including in conflict-affected areas) and consolidation of peace and democracy. For the majority of these responsibilities, the full continuation of activities depends on generating additional resources and on the reversal of the declining field presence of the United Nations country team. Electoral assistance, however, continued to pose a significant challenge, since donors put the funding of the proposed UNDP electoral assistance project on hold.

86. In August, MONUSCO finalized the implementation of its reconfiguration with the redeployment from the west to the east of civilian, police and military personnel in support of more robust and effective operations in areas affected by armed conflict. Existing field offices in North and South Kivu, Katanga and Orientale Provinces were reinforced through the redeployment of 71 staff members and were empowered to assume new responsibilities through the pursuit of an area-based approach to the Mission's operations. Heads of office now have greater autonomy to advocate for early stabilization activities specific to their area of operations, coordinate, and realign resources, including increased funding for quick-impact projects within the Mission, which enables them to better resource such activities, focused mainly on island of stability locations.

87. The streamlined Mission headquarters in Kinshasa continued to support progress against national commitments outlined in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and mandated tasks, including the good offices role of my Special Representative and the wide-ranging partnership mobilized around his coordination initiative in respect of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, elections, security sector reform and stabilization. Antenna offices were fully

operational in the western locations of Bandundu, Kananga, Kindu, Matadi, Mbandaka and Mbuji-Mayi and carried out monitoring and reporting functions jointly with the United Nations country team. MONUSCO co-located with the country team in two locations, notably with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Mbandaka, Equateur Province, and in Kananga, Kasai Occidental.

88. From 21 to 28 July, a joint MONUSCO-United Nations Headquarters civilian staffing review was undertaken to assess the existing civilian staffing structure and put forward recommendations on how to rationalize and right-size it for effective mandate implementation. Its main findings will inform the preparation of the 2015/16 budget for MONUSCO.

VI. Observations

89. I have been encouraged by the successful military operations conducted by FARDC with the support of MONUSCO. These have resulted in a considerable weakening of ADF and, to a lesser extent, some other armed groups. However, I remain concerned that, on the whole, the situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo since the defeat of M23 has evolved more slowly than expected. The neutralization and disarmament of FDLR is stalled. The repatriation of former M23 combatants has seen too little progress and the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan has not yet been fully funded or implemented. Political uncertainty surrounding elections has continued to fuel a number of local conflicts.

90. Despite improvements in security in some areas, some returns of displaced persons and the redeployment of the police, gains remain tenuous and progress in preparing and mobilizing support for the safe and voluntary return of refugees has been slow. Some disarmed combatants have returned to the bush. While previous threats to the authority of the State in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo have been mitigated, residual armed groups continue to fight over territory and mining sites and to attack and harass civilians. As a new and complex initiative requiring mobilization of and coordination with the Government and the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy, islands of stability have been slow to emerge, but are gradually gaining traction.

91. If successfully completed, the voluntary disarmament of FDLR would be a breakthrough in ending the cycle of violence that has characterized eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region for decades. However, since the inception on 30 May of the current disarmament plan, the process has dashed many hopes. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, echoed by regional Heads of State at the mini-summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region held in Luanda on 14 August, has made clear that FDLR should either disarm peacefully before the end of 2014 or face military action. At the midterm review of the FDLR disarmament process in early October, States members of the International Conference and SADC, with United Nations support, are expected to evaluate the process based on clear benchmarks and take important decisions on how to move it forward. I call upon FDLR to disarm unconditionally and, for most of them, begin repatriation to Rwanda, which has already seen some 11,000 former FDLR elements return home safely over the past decade. A small number of FDLR elements may be temporarily relocated to third

countries. However, those suspected of grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law will have to be tried.

92. I also encourage the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, in line with the communiqué of the mini-summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region of 14 August, to act swiftly to implement the Nairobi Declarations of 12 December 2013 and set out a time-bound road map for the repatriation of former M23 combatants from Rwanda and Uganda. In particular, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo needs to accelerate the processing of amnesty requests signed by former M23 combatants, whose individual repatriation depends on the completion of this process. I commend the Congolese authorities for having ensured that all those who presented themselves had the opportunity to sign commitment acts to receive amnesty. I also commend the good cooperation of the Governments of Rwanda and Uganda in facilitating the respective technical missions led by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to prepare for the repatriation of former M23 combatants. All such combatants should be demobilized and the members of the group who are accused of serious crimes should face justice.

93. The advancement of this repatriation process only adds to the urgency of putting into effect the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan. The repatriation of former M23 elements could add over 2,000 former combatants to the existing caseload of 4,000 from other armed groups. I urge partners to commit the necessary additional funds for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Continued delays will only increase the risks of failure, which could engender the emergence of new armed groups.

94. The establishment of the Constitutional Court and the transmission to the National Assembly by the Government of the three draft laws on the organization of local, provincial and general elections represent positive steps towards the goal of organizing the complete 2014-2016 electoral cycle. However, these are only partial and belated steps, which have not yet succeeded in inspiring the full confidence of all stakeholders in the electoral process. I remain concerned about the slow progress in determining the full legal framework, timeline and budgetary allocations, which are essential for completing the electoral cycle. I therefore encourage the Democratic Republic of the Congo to act swiftly to put in place these building blocks to ensure timely, peaceful and transparent elections, in accordance with the Constitution.

95. Dialogue is key to guaranteeing inclusivity, participation and wide acceptance of future results in the electoral process. For now, dialogue, especially among the main protagonists, namely, the Commission électorale nationale indépendante, the Government, political parties and civil society, remains limited, and deepening divergences around the electoral process continue. I reiterate my full support for my Special Representative in carrying out his critical, mandated good offices role to help to forge a basic consensus around the modalities for organizing the elections.

96. MONUSCO will continue to support the judiciary in fighting impunity for human rights violations, including by providing support for trials. I also urge the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure the timely adoption of the draft laws on the implementation of its obligations as a State party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the creation of a specialized, mixed chamber, both of which are important tools in the fight against impunity.

97. The improvement in the security situation is not yet irreversible. The Mission and the Congolese authorities should remain vigilant so that they are able to deter violence against civilians and intervene effectively when attacks are launched. There is a need to ensure the protection of civilians through prevention, mobility and active intervention rather than mere presence. In that connection, early warning mechanisms have been reinforced and joint preventive actions have increased. However, the Congolese authorities also need to do more to identify and prosecute perpetrators in such complex conflicts, where cycles of reprisals can be perpetuated. I call upon the Congolese authorities at the highest levels to denounce ethnically targeted attacks and to work more effectively with civil society groups and local community leaders to foster reconciliation and prevent conflict among communities. The United Nations will fully support those efforts.

98. It is crucial that the root causes of instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo be addressed in a determined manner and without delay. I urge the Government to work with MONUSCO and the international community to implement the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, advance security sector reform, in particular defence sector reform, strengthen guarantees for the independence of the judiciary and accelerate the installation of the Constitutional Court and the other superior jurisdictions foreseen by the Constitution. I also call upon the Government to take action to ensure that the National Human Rights Commission becomes fully operational. In addition to protection and early warning mechanisms being established at the local level, much more needs to be done to ensure that credible and functional structures are put in place at the local level to support conflict prevention and reconciliation and facilitate the return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons.

99. I wish to express my appreciation to my Special Representative, Martin Kobler, and my former Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Mary Robinson, for their tireless efforts in mobilizing the necessary national, regional and international attention to find lasting solutions to the situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. I welcome my new Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, who assumed his functions on 1 September, and call upon all partners to lend him their unwavering support in carrying out his mandate. I also pay tribute to the commendable contribution of the envoys of the African Union, the European Union and the United States, as well as the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and SADC, in the pursuit of peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. I would like to express my gratitude to all the personnel of MONUSCO and the United Nations country team for their courage and determination in undertaking their duties in a challenging and unpredictable environment. I also thank the countries contributing troops and police to MONUSCO, donor countries, international and regional organizations and non-governmental organizations for their invaluable support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

